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THE INDEPENDENT

Thursday 2 April 1998 45p (R50p) No 3,574

Camelot sacks GTech as lottery cleans up its act

By Ian Burrell

A NEW five-member body was set up yesterday to regulate the National Lottery as it emerged that lottery operator Camelot had bought out the stake of its controversial American partner GTech.

Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, said the new Lottery Commission would reduce the risk of conflicts of interest. The move follows the resignation of the first lottery watchdog following Virgin chief Richard Branson's libel victory in the High Court earlier this year.

Peter Davis stepped down from his position as director general of Oflot after the hearing, at which Mr Branson said he had been offered a bribe by Guy Snowden, a director of GTech, which held a 22.5 per cent stake in Camelot. Mr Snowden wanted Mr Branson to drop out of the race to run the lottery.

It emerged that Mr Davis had accepted free flights from GTech, which is currently under investigation by Oflot over whether it is a "fit and proper" company to be involved in the National Lottery.

Yesterday Camelot, which has been under pressure to sever its links with the American company, said it would pay £51m for GTech's stake. The buy-out leaves Cadbury Schweppes, Racal and De La Rue with a 26.67 per cent stake and ICL with 20 per cent.

Camelot insisted yesterday that the changes would make no difference to the day-to-day running of the lottery.

In a statement it said: "Camelot believes this is the right response to the public mood for a largely British-owned operator of the National Lottery, and that it is in the best interests of lottery players." GTech will continue to supply Camelot with lottery systems and services.

Mr Smith said he welcomed Camelot's "sensitivity to the public mood". But he added that it would be wrong to say anything further until Oflot's acting chief, John Stoker, had completed his investigation into GTech's position.

Under the changes announced yesterday by Mr Smith, the post of Director General will be scrapped to make way for the five-strong Commission. The Commission will still be serviced by Oflot and will have the same duties and functions as the director general.

Mr Smith said: "This is good news for the good causes because they'll be assured of support from a team of people overseeing their income."

"It's good news for the operator because it will not be subject to the whim of a single individual regulator."

"Above all it's good news for players because they'll be assured that the lottery is being run properly."

The changes will be introduced as an amendment to the National Lottery Bill which is due to come before MPs for its second reading next week.

The new structure is expected to be up and running by 1999, in time to oversee the competition for the new Lottery licence to begin in 2001.

The Commission replaces plans in the lottery Bill for an "advisory panel" to help the director general choose the next operator.

Mr Smith said: "[The Commission] will reduce the risk, actual or perceived, of conflicts of interest and regulatory capture, and remove the focus on an individual."

Electronic CV planned for every citizen

By Judith Judd
Education Editor

Today, Mr Higgins will outline his scheme at a conference sponsored by *The Independent* and *Independent on Sunday*: "We are into lifelong learning. So we aim for a database of every single citizen in the UK, which will hold all their educational and other achievements."

The database might be used as proof of qualifications for entry to university or employment or as a check on the state of someone's student loan.

To begin with, the new "profiles" would include exam results and other qualifications from the age of 16, such as vocational qualifications, GCSEs and A-levels, "key skills" in communication and numeracy and achievements in activities such as music and sport. Eventually it might also contain pupils' marks from the age of five. Qualifications would automatically be fed into the data-awarding bodies.

Universities and employers, he said, would be able to check the universities' admissions and employers' reports will

point out that individuals would own their own profiles and would decide whether they wanted them released.

Ministers are already consulting on the idea of giving everyone a number, possibly based on their national insurance number, which would be attached to their profile.

The very fact that the profiles exist, the report will say, would give people an incentive to continue learning throughout their lives. It envisages a future in which people dip in and out of education. It will say that universities, and possibly employers, could lay out in a precise electronic format the qualifications and personal qualities they want, helping to match people to jobs and courses.

Mr Higgins says: "If the proposal is adopted, they will fundamentally change attitudes and practices so that we shall have a more socially cohesive and better educated population, with all the economic and cultural benefits that that would bring."

Personal profiles, page 6

Chinese PM enjoys a traditional British welcome ...



Chinese prime minister Zhu Rongji shelters from April showers yesterday on the first day of his official visit to Britain. Mr Zhu is due to meet Tony Blair for talks today, ahead of the second Asia-Europe Meeting. Report, page 12 Photograph by Lynne Sadky/AP

New HRT pill to be sold over counter

By Andrew Yates

TREATMENT of the menopause, which affects millions of middle-aged women every year, could be revolutionised by the launch of a tablet which is promised by its makers to be a safe alternative to Hormone Replacement Therapy.

Promensil is based on plant oestrogen which is found in soya and vegetables such as beans. It is said to help cure the menopause symptoms, which can cause hot flushes, profuse sweating or even depression and violent mood swings.

Novogen, the Australian pharmaceutical group which has developed Promensil, plans to launch the tablets in the US next week and in Britain this summer. A monthly course is likely to cost about £10.

Promensil will be the first medically-tested menopause treatment in Britain which is available from chemists without a prescription. Existing herbal remedies such as Evening Primrose Oil have not been clinically proven to help cure menopause symptoms. And as a natural remedy Promensil is reported not to have so far shown any of the side effects associated with HRT, including increased risk of uterine cancer and severe headaches. However, doctors would point out that adverse side effects could take many years to show up.

Tens of thousands of women are already using Promensil in Australia, where it was launched five months ago and has become one of the top five best selling over-the-counter treatments.

Novogen hopes to eventually use the plant oestrogen to perfect other remedies - to help reduce cholesterol levels in men, and the incidence of prostate cancer.

Novogen developed Promensil after studying the dietary habits of the Japanese, whose women are less affected by the menopause than their Western counterparts because they eat more vegetables containing oestrogens.

Dr Graham Kelly, Novogen's founder and chairman, said: "More than 70 per cent of Australian women who have tried it [Promensil] are very satisfied with its performance."

The global menopause market is currently worth about \$3bn (£1.5bn) a year, but the potential market could grow to \$20bn. Fewer than 1 in 10 women currently suffering from the menopause completes a full course of HRT due to worries about potential side effects.

However, Professor David Purdie, chairman of the British Menopause Society, was cautious. He said: "There is some preliminary evidence that some symptoms of the menopause can be relieved to a degree by these phyto-oestrogens. But we need to see more carefully-controlled clinical trials."

Cook reveals the coolest people in Britain

THE GOVERNMENT yesterday stepped up its bid to project a fresh modern image for "Cool Britannia" by unveiling a panel of experts charged with promoting a true picture of the nation to the rest of the world.

Foreign Secretary Robin Cook revealed the names of the 33 men and women who will make up the new Panel 2000, including designer Stella McCartney, Channel 4 News presenter Zeinab Badawi and Minister Without Portfolio, Peter Mandelson. The move comes as Tony Blair prepares to launch the Powerhouse/UK exhibition of the work of young British designers to coincide with the arrival of foreign leaders for this week's Asia-Europe Meeting.

Mr Cook said yesterday that the Panel 2000 was not out to "re-brand" Britain and he promised that the Government was not turning its back on the country's historic heritage.

Details, page 10

st at Scrubs

on cause of "sickness". Later in the day as a new shift came on a further 40 were also overcome with 'ness.

Richard Tilt, the Director-General of the Prison Service, said: "Reporting sick in such numbers helps no one. I realise that the current situation has unsettled many but the way forward is to have allegations properly and fully investigated."

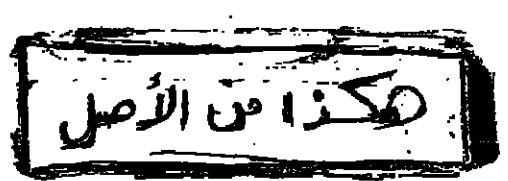
Adams, national vice of the Prison Officers' Association, yesterday insisted that officers who were off sick were generally "not sick". "Their families based ... we saw members breaking because of what" he said.

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Airline price war sets fares tumbling

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

BRITISH Airways fired the first shot in an air fares war yesterday with the announcement that its low-cost, no-frills carrier - Go - will offer £100 return tickets to European capitals.

The new airline will begin flying to Rome, Milan and Copenhagen from Stansted. The planned two flights a day, which start in May, will offer "quality food" for sale and Go promises to do away with tickets and boarding passes. "All you will need to travel is your passport," claims Barbara Cassani, the company's chief executive.

The 300 seats a day being offered by BA's Go operation are merely the first steps in the airline's attempt to stave off the flock of low-cost carriers that have sprung up over Europe.

Ms Cassani yesterday confirmed Go was also considering flights to Stockholm, Paris, Edinburgh, Nice and Amsterdam. "Germany has great potential too. Basically nothing is sacrosanct," she said. "We will be up to three services a day later this year." Combined with the strong pound, European fares are likely to drop to their lowest level.

The rapid expansion will alarm other smaller competitors worried that BA aims to put them out of business. EasyJet, which flies from Luton, said Go had chosen deliberately not to fly to any of its destinations be-

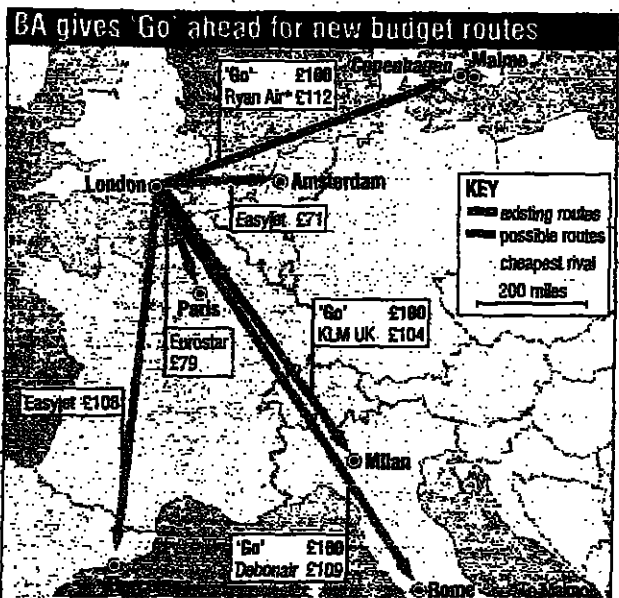
cause of a pending legal action.

"We see this as a temporary situation. With our 12 aircraft to be delivered within the next 18 months, and their own growth plans, we will be crossing swords very soon," said EasyJet's chairman, Stelios Haji-Ioannou. He added that all three cities chosen by BA were on EasyJet's schedule for 1999.

To start with all 148 seats on Go's Boeing 737 will be priced at £100 - a departure for the airline industry which usually only offers a tenth of a plane's capacity at its lowest price. Go will be operating three leased Boeing 737s initially.

Debonair, which flies from Luton, will be meeting Go's challenge head-on as both will fly to Rome. "But it is not just us - they will be poaching passengers from British Airways which flies six times a day to Rome," said Franco Mancasola, Debonair's chief executive.

Michael O'Leary, who runs Ryanair - which also flies from Stansted, reacted "coolly" to BA's move pointing out the £100 fare was "an introductory offer only". Ryanair has announced six new routes from Stansted this summer, including three to Italy. Although Ryanair appears indifferent to BA's new airline, it will face tough competition. Its flight to Malmo will compete for virtually the same market as Go's trip to Copenhagen - when a bridge connecting the two cities opens.



No-frills style: Barbara Cassani, who runs Go, BA's cut-price airline which takes off in May

I'm no superwoman, says the high-flyer with no frills

IN THE NEWS

BARBARA CASSANI

TODAY IS ONE of the most important days of Barbara Cassani's life, writes Ann Treneman. This morning, bookings open for her new airline - the cut-price Go which starts flying from Stansted in May. It is being marketed as one that is no-frills but with some style. In this way it is a bit like the boss - a 37-year-old American transplant - though she has no intention of playing this up. "I'm not into cult of personality."

What she is into is hard work and lots of it. She is American and is one of those people who gets up at 6am. She eats breakfast with her (English) husband, an investment banker, and they are both out of the house before their two small children are even awake. "We tiptoe out, so we don't wake up the nanny," she says.

She works a 12-hour day and is home to read a book at bedtime to the kids. Then, she says, it's usually time for a little more work.

Barbara Cassani is a classic driven Type A and a compulsive list-maker. "My lists are essential and I love the feeling of satisfaction I get when I can tick things off," she says. She is driven, and not only in work. When talking about the long commute to Stansted from her west-London home, she adds: "It will be gruesome. But if I am driving in the morning I plan to do lots of things like buy some language tapes and learn something new."

Everyone says that Ms Cassani is down-to-earth, a team-player and easy to get along with. She is giggly and girlish and has a good sense of humour. Just when you think she must be a poster child for something, they add in a lower tone of voice that she can also be ruthless. She admits as much herself, though only in her natural language of management speak: "I am quite a focused person who likes to deliver results."

She doesn't like labels, even one as obvious as the fact she

is American. As an employee of British Airways for 10 years, she claims not to be an "import", despite what her passport may say. Her life may be that of a superwoman but she rejects the very word. "I am just not gender aware," she has said. (She talks like this a lot. For instance, she claims that as head of Go: "My job is to transfer vision".)

Ms Cassani says she likes change - which is good because she's certainly had a lot of it. She spent her childhood moving around America following her father's sales and marketing job, and much of her career has involved ping-ponging between the US and Britain as a BA executive.

In between came two degrees: she got her BA in in-

ternational relations from Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts and her MA in public affairs from Princeton (where she met her husband, Guy Davis). She worked as a management consultant with Coopers & Lybrand but was frustrated by giving good advice that didn't get followed. One day she answered a newspaper advertisement for somebody who would "challenge markets and be part of creating a new vision of the world" in a service industry.

It turned out to be BA. At first she worked on their computer reservations systems, then in sales and marketing.

She was living in America when the telephone rang and BA chairman Bob Ayling offered her the chance to help set up what would become Go.

"I discussed it with my husband for all of five seconds," she says. "We moved back to London before I even knew if the project would be going ahead."

As of today it is all Go - and

LOW POINT

Barbara Cassani is known as warm and witty - except when the subject of dirty tricks is mentioned. Even though her role was peripheral in the controversial battle between British Airways and Richard Branson's Virgin that caused BA such huge embarrassment, Ms Cassani reacts to questions in an almost formal manner. "I am a highly professional and honest person," she has said.

HIGH POINT

The market for low-cost airlines may be cut-throat. Witness the adverts late last year that warned that Barbara Cassani was merely an agent of Bob Ayling at British Airways. "Beauty and the Beast,"

said one advert above pictures of the pair. Ms Cassani was less than terrified. "It so sweet!" she hooted. "They think I'm beautiful. I showed my husband and I said, 'There'. He was laughing so much he was under the table."

NO GUILT

At one point last year Ms Cassani was commuting across the Atlantic in order to see her children. Things got a little easier when the family relocated to south-west London though she still only sees her kids for an hour or so a day during the week. She has a nanny and a housekeeper and no guilt. "I never resent the job. I feel comfortable with the choice I have made," she said. "No one forces anything on me."

Saddam leads way as April fool jokes backfire around world

By Louise Jury

OH, HE is a wag that Saddam Hussein. Or at least his son is. Uday owns Iraq's most influential newspaper whose front page yesterday proclaimed that United States President Bill Clinton had called for an end to United Nations sanctions against Iraq.

"Boom, boom. As the continuation of the news item on its second page made clear, the story was an April fool's joke. "It is the beginning of spring. Many happy returns."

Yet the side-splitting black humour of Hussein junior was nothing compared with other April fools which backfired around the world.

One Portuguese radio station upset football fans when it tricked them into believing the country had won late entry into the World Cup in France this summer. A Lisbon broadcaster announced that Iran had decided not to compete "for security reasons" and that Fifa, football's governing body, had designated Portugal as their replacement.

In Scotland, a government



Uday Hussein's paper carrying good news from Clinton

housing agency had to issue a formal apology after it was accused of being "crass and insensitive" for its effort to make people smile. Scottish Homes had issued a press release saying rural housing problems could be tackled by moving complete empty urban homes into the countryside.

A spokesman went on to claim that not only the houses, but the lamp posts and pave-

ments could be moved too. But the housing charity Shelter Scotland failed to see the funny side and Jim Wallace, leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats, echoed its objections. Tricia Marwick, spokeswoman for Shelter Scotland, said: "We have a real housing crisis in Scotland and if Scottish Homes think that is a fit subject for a joke then I don't think much of their sense of humour."

And Shelter's policy officer, Michael Thain, said: "It is a bit like the NHS making a joke about chucking old people out of hospitals to free up waiting lists."

Meanwhile, the Financial Times was slightly pinker than usual yesterday after it fell for an April fool joke by the drinks company Guinness - even breaking the embargo to publish a day early.

"Greenwich Mean Time will be renamed 'Guinness Mean Time' until the end of 1999 and the Accurist speaking clock will be amended to feature 'pint drips' instead of 'pips' to count the seconds," the newspaper dutifully reported.

Unfortunately, it was not true, although a spokeswoman for Guinness was charitable to the reporter concerned. "The FT was running a perfectly serious business piece and Guinness faxed over the spoof among other information. It wasn't really his fault."

The newspaper failed to see the funny side. "The release was apparently intended as part of an April 1 spoof," it noted, sniffily, in yesterday's correction.

Channel 4 told to apologise to Greens

By Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

CHANNEL 4 has been told to issue an on-screen apology to leading members of the Green movement after television's watchdog issued a damning report on its controversial *Against Nature* series.

In a major embarrassment for the broadcaster, *Against Nature*, which tried to take a critical view of environmentalism, has been found to have distorted the views of four contributors to the programme by selective editing, according to the Independent Television Commission. The

makers of the programme, RDF Television, have also been found to have misled the contributors about the subject of the programmes when persuading them to take part in it.

Lord Melchett, head of Greenpeace, Tony Juniper of Friends of the Earth and two other leading conservationists complained to the ITC about how their views were presented by the programme.

After viewing unedited tapes of their interviews the ITC found that: "The views of the four complainants, as made clear to the interviewer, had been distorted by selective editing."

The ITC also found: "The in-

terviewees had also been misled as to the content and purpose of the programmes when they agreed to take part."

Against Nature caused a furore in Green circles when it was shown in December last year and claimed that most environmentalist arguments could be disproved by "rational" science. It was promoted by Channel 4 as a counter-weight to the Green movement's "theology". It suggested that environmentalists had made science terrifying and argued that sustainable development held poor countries back.

The programmes were widely attacked and it was suggested that they followed the

agenda of the fringe political group the Revolutionary Communist Party. Two of its contributors were linked to the RCP or were writers for its magazine *Living Marxism*.

Ian Willmore, spokesman for Friends of the Earth, welcomed the ITC's report: "This was a thoroughly bad programme which stitched up people who took part in it and was at best shoddy in its use of facts."

Channel 4 said: "We welcome the ITC's view which approved the approach adopted by *Against Nature* as a legitimate one. This reaffirms Channel 4's freedom to explore difficult, unpopular and unfashionable terrain."

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Josie award derisory, says her lawyer

By Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

THE COMPENSATION paid to Josie Russell, the 11-year-old girl who was severely injured in an attack in which her mother and sister were murdered, is to be re-assessed following an outcry over the decision to pay her £18,500.

Josie's lawyer, and campaigners, attacked the amount of compensation as "derisory" and an official appeal has been lodged.

Jack Straw, the Home Sec-

retary, said he could intervene, but added that he hoped the family would appeal.

The Home Office is currently re-examining the amounts being paid to victims of crime, but under cost-cutting changes introduced by the last Government there is little discretion involved in calculating the total payouts. A new fixed tariff means that the amounts being awarded have dropped significantly in the past two years.

Josie suffered severe head injuries and was left for dead in the attack in which her mother

Lin, 45, and sister Megan, 6, were battered to death on a country path in Chillenden, Kent, in July 1996.

The £18,500 award was given to Josie for the loss of her mother, at a maximum of £2,000 a year up to the age of

18, plus any care costs. A second package of compensation is awarded for the actual injuries Josie suffered, which include speech problems, head injuries and post-traumatic stress. Her lawyer believes these will total about £20,000.

The maximum award for either compensation package is £500,000, but this is intended for exceptional circumstances, such as when a high earner is paralysed for life.

A spokesman for the Criminal Injuries Compensation Au-

thority admitted yesterday that part of the reason for the tariffs was to save money.

He added: "We are tied to the terms of the scheme, there are set amounts. We can't change the rules as we go along."

The Duchess of Kent with Josie Russell during the Children of Courage Awards 1996 ceremony
Photograph: John Voos

and compensating Josie for the terrible loss of her mother and younger sister. They didn't take the opportunity, and gave the lowest possible level award."

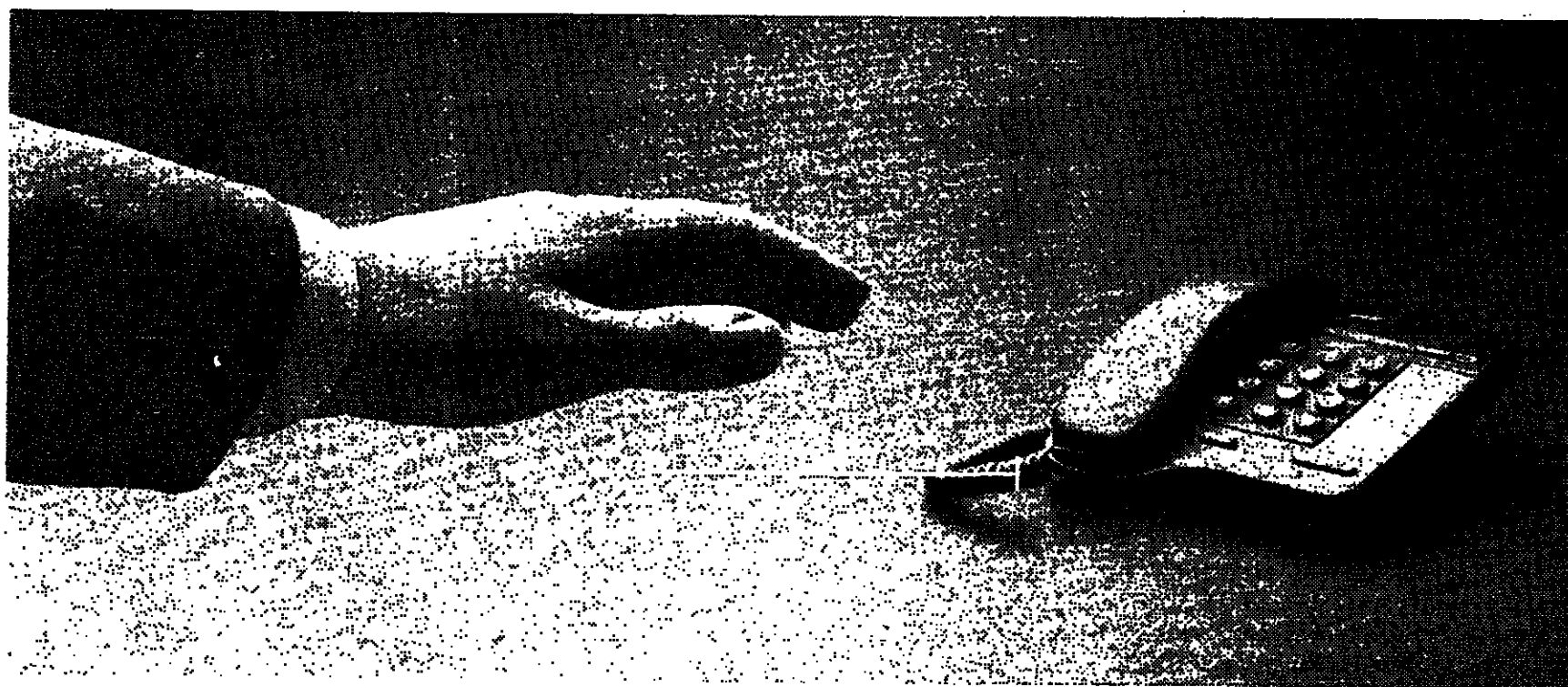
Jack Straw said: "There is a right of appeal which Josie's father can exercise in this case. If he has not already done so, I hope that he will do so."

Under the fixed tariff, the loss of an eye is set at £20,000, the loss of hearing in one ear is £11,500 and the most severe mental and physical injury could result in £250,000 compensation for the victim. On top of those figures are discretionary awards for care costs which could bring the total up to a maximum of £500,000.

The loss of a parent, as in Josie's case, is dealt with as a separate claim. Under that, a child is entitled to £2,000 a year until the age of 18 and a spouse to £5,000.

Michael Stone, 37, is awaiting trial accused of Lin and Megan's murder.

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Kreutzer Stradivarius sold for record £947,500

A STRADIVARIUS violin was yesterday sold at auction for £947,500 - the highest price paid for such a musical instrument. The "Kreutzer" Stradivarius was bought by Haim Lazarov, a former violinist and dealer based in London, after furious bidding at the South Kensington branch of the auction house Christie's.

The Kreutzer is believed to be named after Rudolphe Kreutzer, a French violinist famous for turning his nose up at a sonnet dedicated to him by Beethoven. Made in 1727, the violin dates from near the end of the so-called golden period of 1700 to 1728 of the world-famous violin-maker Antonio Stradivari. After the sale Mr Lazarov said: "This violin will soon be heard all over the world."

NHS waiting-list success

NATIONAL Health Service hospitals in England have succeeded in clearing those waiting longest from their lists four months after Frank Dobson, Secretary of State for Health, gave them an ultimatum to do so, writes Jeremy Laurence.

Provisional figures released yesterday showed that there were no patients waiting longer than 18 months at the end of March, the limit set down in the Patients' Charter. The number had increased six-fold after the election from 155 last May to 818 in November. Yesterday, Mr Dobson congratulated NHS staff, adding: "Now we move on to deliver other promises."

Marine life monitors

DOLPHINS, whales, sharks and turtles will be under surveillance following the launch today of a marine observation group. Seaguest South West, covering the Devon and Cornwall coasts, will pull together fishermen, wildlife experts and amateurs to help build up a profile of the area's marine life.

Those interested can record any sighting of large sea creatures by telephoning the Cornwall or Devon Wildlife Trusts on 01872 273 929 or 01392 279 244.

Hand-grenade escape

AN UNKNOWN man who delivered a Second World War hand grenade, minus its safety pin, to Pickering police station in North Yorkshire was described as "probably the luckiest man alive" by army bomb-disposal experts who carried out a controlled explosion of the device. The man told police only that he had found the grenade in Northumberland.

Zoe Evans trial: no verdict

JURORS in the trial of Miles Evans for the murder of Zoe Evans, 9, failed to reach a verdict on the second day of their deliberations at Bristol Crown Court yesterday. The army private, 24, of Warminster, Wiltshire, denies murdering his step-daughter last year. The jurors resume their deliberations today.

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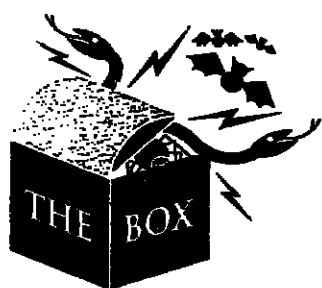
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Straw in humour shock

HOLD the front page! The Home Secretary has a sense of humour. This was confirmed yesterday when he rang one of Pandora's colleagues to say that he had ordered a leak inquiry into the source of our April Fool's Day spoof story. Deadpan, he said that a plan to choose "People's Lords" by lottery was about to be announced. "We will have to establish a leak inquiry into how you obtained this information. These minutes are circulated to a limited list of only 10 officials, so I am carrying out a full inquiry straight away," Jack Straw said. He then admitted he was joking.

Unfortunately, the joke would have fallen a bit flat over at the newsdesks of the *Times* and the *Daily Mail*. Both phoned their Westminster correspondents at midnight on Tuesday when they saw the first edition of *The Independent*, and demanded to know why they did not have this story?

Now concentrate ...

A FRIEND has sent The Box a rather clever maths puzzle that is currently buzzing around the Internet. Follow these six steps, and do not peak at the answer at the bottom of this column.

1. Pick a number from one to seven.
2. Multiply your number by 2.
3. Add 5.
4. Multiply the result by 50.
5. If you have already had your birthday this year, add 1749. If you haven't, add 1747.
6. Final step: subtract the four digit year that you were born.

Now read on and you shall have this last three digit number explained to you in due course.

Lording it down at B&Q

LORD Mackay of Clashfern, Derry Irvine's predecessor as Lord Chancellor, has been eagerly sought by hacks who want to ask him questions about his old Westminster flat and the timing of plans for its refurbishment. But Lord Mackay has succeeded in eluding all, including Pandora. However, another witness has come forward who definitely recalls that he had his rooms redecorated when he took office in 1987 because he found them unpleasantly redolent with the smell of the dogs owned by his predecessor, Lord Hailsham

(above). In fact some of the wallpaper Mackay chose was bedecked with pineapples and definitely Puginesque! Could it be that Lord Mackay was an avid DIY decorator who purchased and installed this himself? If you are reading this, Lord Mackay, please ring Pandora at your earliest convenience.

MoD playing with fire

IN the meantime, I have learned that Lord Irvine's hunger for fine art is far less voracious than that of the Ministry of Defence, which has so many pictures that it doesn't know where they all are. Recently John Spellar, defence minister, instigated an inventory of the MoD's walls. A total of 166 out of 204 works of art could not be found. But some works of art have been removed from this list of missing pictures on the grounds that they were not "art" at all. This includes a cartoon from the *Sun*. Isn't this last deletion, from New Labour's favourite newspaper, just a bit risky?

Now that's tacky

FORGET about the margarine. If you're on a quest for for the crass and vulgar, you've got to head for New York City. The *New York Post* this week revealed that a new delicatessen had opened on the Lower East Side called "Diana-Dodi". It's owner is a native of Alexandria, Egypt, in common with Mohamed Al Fayed, although Abdel Rahman has never met Al Fayed, his son or the Princess of Wales. His counter manager explained that, "Dodi was a very good businessman and he was from a very good family. He's an example for young people".

Here is the AMAZING SOLUTION to the maths puzzle given above. Look at the number you obtained from your final computation. The first digit is your original number. The second two digits are your age. Pandora has been assured that this is the only year it will ever work.

Pandora

DAILY POEM

Complaint and Rejoinder

By Denise Levertov

There's a kind of despair, when your friends
are scattered across the world; you see
how therefore never is there a way
each can envision truly
the others of whom you speak.
Oceans divide your life,
you want to place all of it -
people, places, their tones, atmospheres
everything shared uniquely with each -
into a single bowl, like petals, like sand
in a pile. No one can ever hear or tell
the whole story.

And do you really think
this would not be so if you lived
all of your life on an island,
in a village too small to contain
a single stranger?

This poem comes from *Sands of the Well* (Bloodaxe, £8.95), the final volume completed by Denise Levertov. Born in Essex in 1923, Denise Levertov moved to the US in 1948, where she published 14 poetry collections and worked as a campaigner for civil rights and against war and nuclear weapons. Bloodaxe also publishes her book of memoirs, *Tesserae*.

Wren reveals colonel's love letters

A SENIOR Wren was yesterday accused of breaking up families and continuing relationships with up to six men, as she kept an affair alive with her former boss.

Lieutenant Commander Karen Pearce wrote "intimate letters" to married men during her three-year affair with the high-ranking Army officer, his court martial was told.

But Lt-Cdr Pearce denied having any affairs, except for a brief fling with a fellow naval officer in Malta, before her relationship with Lieutenant Colonel Keith Pople ended in 1996.

Yesterday, on the second day of his court martial, Lt-Cdr Pearce, 34, read out love letters and poems said to have been sent to her by Lt-Col Pople.

The letters told of Lt-Col Pople's passion for his former junior, in a key Ministry of Defence team, and how he planned to leave his wife for her. Other letters sent to friends of the Wren charted the increasing bitterness after their break-up. One described her as "so lovely but almost the most duplicitous person I have ever known".

Lt-Col Pople, 42, sat with his head in his hands as the intimate contents of the letters were read to the hearing at Aldershot, Hampshire. His



Words of love: Lt-Col Keith Pople (left) sat with his head in his hands as intimate letters to Lt-Cdr Pearce were read out at his court martial yesterday



She said that she also met a married Royal Marine major in 1992 and later served with him on HMS *Illustrious* at the height of her affair with Lt-Col Pople.

Miss Willis said: "Why were you forming such a close relationship with another married man at that time?" Lt-Cdr Pearce replied: "We were good friends, it's no more than that." And she denied wanting a sexual relationship with him.

Miss Willis said that one reason why the couple split, in June 1996, was because Lt-Col Pople discovered a drawer full of letters from other men underneath her bed. Miss Willis asked if at any time she had mentioned the correspondence with "five or six close male friends" to Lt-Col Pople.

When the couple split, Miss Willis said Lt-Col Pople told Lt-Cdr Pearce that "he had left his wife. He had left his family for you and he was disappointed that you had received this other correspondence".

But Lt-Cdr Pearce said he had broken off their affair because he claimed he could never make her happy. She said she had never told him about the letters as they were only from friends. The hearing continues.

wife, Brenda, sat next to an Army chaplain a few yards from her husband.

Lt-Col Pople denies two charges of scandalous conduct unbecoming the character of an officer and conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline. If found guilty he faces dismissal from the Army after a distinguished 20-year career.

Standing in the witness box, the uniformed Wren was questioned yesterday

afternoon by Ryddion Willis, counsel for the defence, about her relationships with married men.

Lt-Cdr Pearce admitted that her relationship with a married Royal Marine major had prompted gossip in the wardroom of the aircraft carrier HMS *Illustrious*, on which she served in 1995.

As she started her sexual relationship with Lt-Col Pople the court mar-

tial heard that she also befriended Lt-Col Tim Moore, an American assistant air attaché. She admitted going to dinner and nightclubs with him and that he had stayed the night at her home.

But Lt-Cdr Pearce, of Nyewood, West Sussex, said: "I was 100 per cent loyal to him [Lt-Col Pople] right up to February, 1996. My relationship with Colonel Moore was and is purely platonic."

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هكذا من الأصل

On file: your achievements from cradle to grave

The Government is to consider compiling an electronic profile of everyone's education and experience. Judith Judd and Ben Russell report

WHAT would be on the electronic curriculum vitae for every individual proposed in a report commissioned by the Government?

Plans will be unveiled at a conference today, sponsored by *The Independent* and the *Independent on Sunday*, for a scheme enabling personal education and eventually employment profiles to be built up, underpinning Labour's promise to promote lifelong learning. The report prepared by Tony Higgins, chief executive of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, will suggest that the new profiles would include examination results at least from the age of 16, such as GCSEs, A-levels, vocational qualifications, degrees, MBAs and work-related qualifications.

The profiles would also show whether people had acquired "key skills" such as numeracy, literacy and information technology. Music grades, sporting triumphs and community service might also be there along with positions of responsibility and work experience. Eventually, test results and achievements from the time of starting nursery school might be included, as well as an individual's employment record.

The report is a feasibility study and many details have yet to be considered. Would it include personal references and statements from university applicants? Qualifications would be put in automatically by awarding bodies, but would it be up to individuals to update other parts of their profiles throughout their lives?

Right, we suggest how the profiles of some well-known figures might look.



Name: Tony Blair
Age: 46
Present position: Prime Minister and Labour Party Leader.
Education: Durham Choristers School. Third in the first-year exam.
Fettes College, Edinburgh. A-levels: English, French, History
Conservative candidate in mock election.
St John's College, Oxford 1972-75. Law degree.
Work experience: Called to the Bar, Lincoln's Inn, 1976.
Practised as barrister 1976-83, specialising in employment and industrial law.
Labour MP for Sedgefield 1983. Shadow Treasury Affairs Minister 1985... Elected Labour Party leader and Leader of the Opposition 1994.
Prime Minister 1997.
Other achievements: Durham Choristers School, 1965-66 Scott Cup for best rugby player. 1967 Captain of Junior Colts Cricket Team. 1967 Formed drama group called The Pseudos. Six months' work experience in Paris.



Name: Ann Gloag
Age: 55
Present position: Group managing director, Stagecoach Holdings Plc.
Education: Caledonian Road Primary School, Perth High School.
No O-levels.
Work experience: 1960-65 Trainee nurse, Bridge of Earn Hospital, Perth.
1965-69 Ward sister, Devonshire Royal Hospital, Buxton.
1969-80 Founding partner, Gloag & Co. Re-named Stagecoach Express Services.
1980-83 Co-director, Stagecoach Ltd.
Other achievements: Scottish Marketing Woman of the Year, 1989.
United Kingdom Businesswoman of the Year, 1989-90.



Name: Richard Branson
Age: 47
Present position: Chairman and Chief Executive Virgin Management, Virgin Records Group, Virgin Communications, Virgin Holdings, Virgin Atlantic.
Education: St Austell Primary School, Penzance, 1958-64.
Stowe School, 1964-67.
Five O-levels, A-level in Ancient History.
Work experience: Established student magazine while at school.
1970 Founded mail-order Virgin Records service.
1971 Opened first Virgin Record shop in 1971.
Founded Virgin Atlantic Airways.
Other achievements: Holder of the Blue Riband trophy for the fastest sea crossing of the Atlantic, 1996.
World record crossings of Atlantic by balloon, 1987 and 1991.
Honorary Professor of Economics, University of Surrey, 1997.
Honorary Japanese citizen.



Name: Martin Amis
Age: 47
Present position: Novelist, journalist and broadcaster.
Education: Westminster School, Westminster, London.
Two A-levels.
National Council for the Training of Journalists, certificate 1967.
Work experience: 1960-65 Reporter, *Weston Mercury*.
1965-67 Reporter, *Observer*.
1967-68 Reporter, *Observer*.
1968-69 BBC South West.
1969-70 BBC News, *Newsnight*.
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Lawyer's sinister death that still haunts Ulster

The Finucane killing is still causing controversy, writes David McKittrick



The murdered Belfast solicitor Pat Finucane, leading his acquitted republican client, Pat McGee, from a Belfast court

Photograph: Pacemaker

POLICE and republicans alike could scarcely believe it: Pat McGee had got off. A republican legend within both the IRA and Sinn Féin, it seemed certain that this time he was going to be put away for good.

In November 1988, McGee, who has since died, faced charges of murder, grievous bodily harm and possession of firearms. These related to the deaths of two British Army corporals who drove into a re-

publican funeral cortege in Belfast earlier that year.

McGee, who had almost died while on hungerstrike, was also believed by the intelligence community to be a senior figure in the IRA, at one stage acting

as its Belfast commander. The security forces were dismayed, and republicans delighted, when at a preliminary inquiry all charges were dismissed and he walked free from the court with his solicitor, Pat Finucane.

Four months later in February 1989 Mr Finucane, one of the best-known solicitors in Belfast, was killed in his north Belfast home by three loyalist gunmen who, in front of his family, shot him 14 times. Within hours the

killing was surrounded by political controversy and calls for inquiries, controversy which has deepened over the years.

The first point of controversy arose before the killing took place. In the previous month

Douglas Hogg, then a Home Office minister, caused a stir when he said in Parliament: "I have to state as a fact, but with great regret, that there are in Northern Ireland a number of solicitors who are unduly sympathetic to the cause of the IRA."

His comments were condemned at the time by Seamus Mallon, the Social Democratic and Labour Party MP, who said they could lead to an attempt on the life of a solicitor. Mr Mallon said it would be "on the minister's head and on the heads of this government if an assassin's bullet did what his words had done". This exchange was instantly recalled when Mr Finucane shot.

Although there were hundreds of solicitors in Belfast, only a handful of firms were regarded as regularly specialising in cases involving republican and loyalist suspects prosecuted under anti-terrorist legislation. Mr Finucane's company prominent was among these.

Although he defended several loyalist clients, he attracted particular attention with high-profile performances as lawyer for figures such as McGee and hunger striker Bobby Sands. He also played a leading role at one of the highly publicised inquests into the deaths of republicans killed by police units in the "shoot-to-kill" cases later investigated by John Stalker, former deputy chief constable of Greater Manchester.

Mr Finucane's public identification with big IRA cases would have been enough in itself to attract loyalist attention, but after his death Ulster Defence Association sources made the claim that police had in effect encouraged them to target him.

They alleged that this took place when a number of UDA members were held at Castle-reagh interrogation centre in

Belfast. Detectives told the loyalists, it is said, that three Belfast solicitors were actively involved with the IRA, describing Mr Finucane as "the big financial brain". One of the other solicitors said to have been mentioned was the late Paddy McGrory, who caused the authorities much grief at the inquests into the deaths of three IRA members shot dead by the SAS in Gibraltar.

More information on the Finucane killing emerged years later during the Nelson case, when it was revealed that Brian Nelson, a UDA "intelligence officer", had been planted within the organisation by the Army. Nelson was later jailed for 10 years for involvement in murders.

The military intelligence version of the episode was that he had overstepped the mark and instead of reporting back on loyalist violence had become drawn into it. But the allegation, which has been revived this week, is that elements in military intelligence were using Nelson to help direct the UDA towards certain targets, one of whom was possibly Pat Finucane.

Nelson was not charged in connection with the Finucane killing, but while in custody he wrote that he had informed his Army "handlers" that one of the leaders of the UDA's assassination teams had asked him to gather information on Mr Finucane. He passed on the accompanying photograph, and four days later the lawyer was killed.

The questions raised by this sequence of events have influenced successive legal missions which had examined the Finucane case. They also help explain why many observers regard the case as one of the important cases of unfinished human rights business left over from the height of the Troubles.

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Michael Alexander
Managing Director

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Britain rejects UN call for judicial inquiry

THE GOVERNMENT yesterday rejected a UN report's call for a judicial inquiry into the 1989 murder of Belfast lawyer Pat Finucane, saying that such tribunals were reserved only for matters of urgent public importance, writes David McKittrick.

It also reacted coolly to the call for an investigation into alleged police harassment of defence lawyers, though it conceded that this was a matter of considerable concern.

The responses followed publication in Geneva of the report, which was drawn up for the United Nations Human Rights Commission. Its author is Malaysian jurist Param Kumaraswamy, who is the Commission's special rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers.

The killing of Mr Finucane, who met his death at the hands of loyalist gunmen, has for years been the subject of allegations of security force collusion. The UN report warned: "So long as this murder is unresolved, many in the community will continue to lack confidence in the ability of the Government to dispense justice in a fair and equitable manner."

The Government responded that an RUC inquiry into his death had been followed by another carried out by a senior English policeman, John Stevens. It said the Northern Ireland DPP had concluded there was insufficient evidence

to warrant any prosecution, adding: "Unless new evidence is brought to light there can be no justification for another inquiry, although the police file remains open."

On allegations of hostile police treatment of lawyers who specialise in defending republican and loyalist suspects, Mr Kumaraswamy concluded: "The RUC has engaged in activities which constitute intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper concern." Among other suggestions, he recommended that the RUC should as a matter of urgency organise training seminars for police officers to sensitise them to the important role of defence solicitors.

Describing this as "obviously a matter of considerable concern," the Government asked to be provided with specific details of the allegations made to the UN, adding: "If there is new evidence we will want to ensure that this is looked into."

Mo Mowlam, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, yesterday told a committee of MPs that the RUC had to change as part of the peace process to end hostility over symbols, including its "Royal" title, writes Colin Brown.

She said that the force's name would stay the same for the time being, but added: "We are trying to put issues on the agenda, but we don't want to fight over the symbolic ones. We want evolutionary change so that these follow on naturally."

INFORMATION LINE NUMBER 0645 66 88 66.

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At risk Fahim Manji, 12, is receiving chemotherapy while doctors search for a bone-marrow donor

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

£100,000 needed to save life of leukaemia boy

By Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

A FAMILY fighting to save the life of their 12-year-old son who has leukaemia face a bill of up to £100,000 to pay for his treatment.

Without the money Fahim Manji, who is being treated at the Royal Free Hospital, London, may be denied the bone-marrow transplant he needs. He has already had two courses of chemotherapy but a month ago doctors found that the disease had spread to his spinal fluid, indicating a relapse.

He is now undergoing further chemotherapy to clear the leukaemia cells while doctors search for a bone-marrow donor. Dr Michael Potter, consultant haematologist, said: "It is his best hope."

The family, who are from Tanzania, are not eligible for National Health Service treatment. They mortgaged their house for £10,000 before travelling to Britain last June in the belief that it would be more than enough to pay for treatment.

After articles appeared in *The Independent* and the *Harrow Observer*, which launched an appeal on their behalf chaired by the mayor of Harrow where the family is staying with relatives, they raised £35,000 which has covered the cost of Fahim's treatment so far.

A bone-marrow transplant, which involves up to six weeks in

hospital and six months' recuperation, will cost another £50,000-£80,000. In addition, the cost of finding a donor, paying insurance and other costs is up to £20,000.

Dr Potter said a search of the worldwide bone-marrow register had disclosed one provisional match but further tests were required. "We can't guarantee that a transplant would cure him but it would reduce the chances of the leukaemia coming back. Without it there is a high chance he will have another relapse."

If the money could not be raised, it was uncertain whether the transplant could go ahead, he said. "At the moment his treatment is secure. Obviously, we have an obligation to treat people who are acutely sick. But once he is well again and the issue of the transplant comes up then it will be very difficult... I am not sure what will happen."

Fahim's parents, Amin, 36, and Nasim, 38, who run a salt mine in Tanzania, decided to bring their son to Britain when they were told the treatment he needed could not be

provided at home. Over the last nine months, they have tried every avenue to raise money.

Mrs Manji, speaking from her son's bedside, said: "Fahim was happy and well and going to school and then suddenly this happens. He has completely changed. From being a talkative boy he has become very quiet and withdrawn."

Mr Manji, who has been denied a work permit to allow him to support his family, said: "It is very discouraging but there is still hope. The doctors have been so kind and they are optimistic. They have made it clear we need to raise the money immediately."

He said even if he had sold everything he owned in Tanzania it would have raised less than £20,000. After the article appeared in *The Independent* last June, he received more than 100 letters, one containing a cheque for £10,000 and several others with cheques for £500. "It was marvellous. People have been very kind-hearted."

He does not know what will happen if they cannot raise enough for the transplant. "I have a boy who is sick, a hospital that is asking for money and a home to support. I have been in the graveyard for the last nine months. But there is a light at the end of every tunnel - if Fahim gets better. That is what we are hoping."

Donations may be sent to the Fahim Manji Appeal, 326 Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2DR.

Lawrence killing: Police failed to stop racists' car

By Kathy Marks

SHORTLY after Stephen Lawrence was stabbed, police saw a car full of jeering white youths, including three known racists, twice drive past the murder scene, the inquiry into his death was told yesterday.

But although officers concluded that the youths were behaving suspiciously and passed on details of their red Y-registration Vauxhall Astra over the police radio, the car was not stopped until more than a week later, the inquiry heard.

It was later established that the car's occupants on the night that Stephen, 18, was stabbed to death at a bus stop in Eltham, south-east London, included Daniel Copley and Jason Goatley, who had been convicted in 1991 of offences connected with the murder of Roland Adams.

Rolan, a black 15-year-old, died of stab wounds after he and his brother, Nathan, 14, were attacked by a gang of 15 white youths while on their way home from a youth club in Thamesmead, south-east London. Another occupant of the car, the

inquiry was told, was Kieran Hyland, a "leading light" in a racist organisation called Nazi Turn-Out, known as NTO, which was active in nearby Eltham, where Stephen was killed.

Sergeant Andrew Hodges, a member of a Territorial Support Group unit, said he saw the Astra - containing five white youths who were "laughing and joking" - drive past the scene of Stephen's murder just after he had helped to cordon it off. A few minutes later, the car drove past again in the opposite direction. Under cross-examination by Michael Mansfield QC, counsel for the Lawrence family, Sgt Hodges agreed that no attempt was made to flag it down.

Five white youths were eventually charged with Stephen's murder, but the case did not reach trial and a private prosecution by his family was unsuccessful. The inquiry is examining issues arising from his death.

Sgt Nigel Clement, who was with Sgt Hodges and radioed the Astra's details, stopped the car - then containing just Daniel Copley and Kieran Hyland - when he spotted it in the area

eight days later. But he told Ian McDonald QC, counsel for Duwayne Brooks, a friend of Stephen's who was with him when he was attacked, that he knew nothing of the two youths' backgrounds, nor of that of Jason Goatley, until yesterday. "What you are telling me now is the first indication that I am aware of," he said.

John Sentamu, Bishop of Stepney and a member of the inquiry panel, asked Sgt Clement why other police vehicles at the murder scene did not set off in pursuit of the Astra. "Why did it not happen?" he asked. "Why did someone not say 'We've seen five youths, let's get after them'?"

Sgt Clement replied: "It's hard to say. In an ideal world, that vehicle would have been stopped on the night, and it would have been a great help to us."

Inspector Steven Groves, the senior officer first in charge of the murder scene, told the inquiry that he knew nothing about the Astra. "I don't recall the car, or being told about it," he said.

The inquiry continues today.



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Fog fools drivers into going faster

FOG clouds the brains of motorists and makes them think they are driving more slowly than they really are, scientists said yesterday. The illusion causes motorists to speed up, sometimes with tragic consequences.

Pile-ups on foggy motorways are often blamed on people driving too fast for the conditions. But according to researchers at the University of Wales, Cardiff, "motorway madness" may be due to an inbuilt inability to judge speed in the fog.

A team of psychologists, led by Robert Snowden, simulated the view from a vehicle moving along a road to show how perception changed in different conditions.

Tests showed that the subjects perceived the landscape to be moving more slowly in "misty" or "foggy" scenes than when the road was clear.

In another experiment, subjects were asked to "drive" a simulated vehicle at set speeds along a winding road.

They were found to speed up as conditions switched from "clear" to "misty" and "foggy".

Writing in the journal *Nature*, the researchers said: "Many horrendous vehicle accidents occur in foggy weather. Drivers know they should slow down because fog reduces visibility, but many still drive too quickly."

"The blame for many such accidents may be due to a perceptual quirk: it appears that drivers think they are driving far more slowly than they actually are in foggy conditions, and therefore increase their speed."

Teachers warn of strike over holiday changes

TEACHERS' leaders yesterday warned that moves to extend the school year would provoke strike action, writes Ben Russell.

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers, said altering the three-term year would be "the last straw that breaks the camel's back".

Margaret Hodge, chair of the Commons education select committee, advocated ending long summer holidays in favour of a four- or five-term year earlier this month.

Local government leaders have also come out in favour of change, to spread holidays more evenly throughout the year.

But Mr de Gruchy said: "This is in response to Margaret 'Holiday' Hodge. It's a load of baloney. If people want to have children that's fine, but I do think there's some onus on parents to spend some of their time with them. People cannot expect schools to bring them up entirely. This is an issue teachers are fed up to the back teeth with."

Mrs Hodge has argued that teachers should have more help with administration in return for extending the 38-week school year. NASUWT members are expected to debate a motion condemning any changes at their annual Easter conference. The union leadership is awaiting the result of a ballot on industrial action over what it claims is excessive bureaucracy in schools.

Secret

Cook's stars to push cool Britannia

By Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

ROBIN COOK appeared faintly embarrassed by his new role as "Mr Cool Britannia" yesterday as he launched a panel of experts charged with transforming the nation's image abroad.

"Actually, I personally find 'Cool Britannia' a great ice-cream and I recommend it," Mr Cook said, adding that he should not be endorsing an American product made by Ben and Jerry.

But despite its public unveiling on the morning of 1 April, the exercise was an entirely serious one, the Foreign Secretary maintained.

The group of 33 men and women from the worlds of fashion, business, sport and the arts would set out to convince the world that the UK had more to offer than old buildings and traditions.

"The picture many have of us is out of date. Some see us as we were 20 years ago, stuck in decline. Some see us as no more than the sum of our past - a heritage theme park of castles and villages."

"All too often our innovativeness and creativity in IT, design, business and a range of other areas is insufficiently widely recognised," he said.

Mr Cook highlighted the Foreign Office's existing use of modern technology, including satellite television, to get its message across.

He had himself set up in his office a display of British products which demonstrated "the creative genius of Britain", he said, adding: "I am proud to show it to my visitors from around the world."

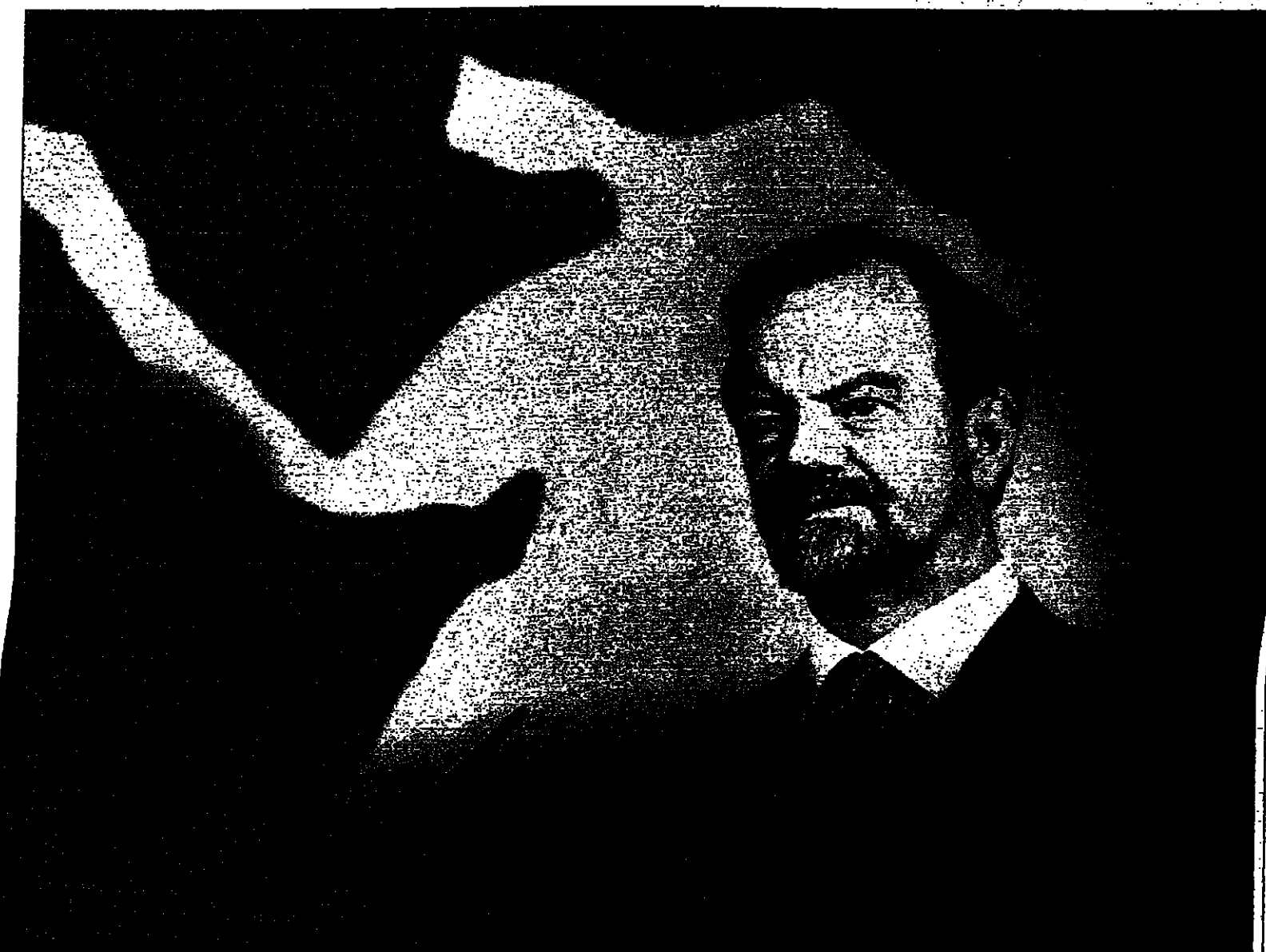
Sir Michael Jay, the Ambassador in Paris and a member of the group, had also set up a display of the latest modern designs from Britain in the French embassy.

Among the members will be Michael Levy, the multi-millionaire record producer and tennis partner to Tony Blair, who recently became Lord Levy. He set up Labour's blind trusts.

Wahed Ali, head of the Planet 24 television company, makers of *The Big Breakfast*, will add glamour to the proceedings, along with Zeinab Badawi, the Channel Four news reader, and Stella McCartney, Chloé fashion designer and daughter of Sir Paul McCartney.

Judy Simpson, the athlete, will be one of the group, as will the Minister without Portfolio, Peter Mandelson, the independent MP Martin Bell, and Sir Colin Marshall of British Airways.

Ms Badawi said the panel would be particularly appealing to young people. "Ours is a forward-looking country where newcomers are increasingly encouraged to make their mark. Panel 2000 can do much to dispel the outdated belief that this is a rigid society bound by tradition," she said.



Captain Cook: The Foreign Secretary at the launch of Panel 2000, a group charged with promoting Britain's image

Photograph: Michael Crabtree

Panel 2000 to forge a new image

THE panel is chaired by the Foreign Office Minister Derek Fatchett. Its members are as follows. Private sector: Wahed Ali (Planet 24), Zeinab Badawi, pictured right (Channel 4), Martin Bell MP, Baroness Chalker (former Tory minister), Dr Frances D'Souza (Article 19), David John (British Oxygen Company), Mark Leonard (Demos), Lord Levy (MG Records), Ruth Mackenzie (Scottish Opera), Sir Colin Marshall (British Airways), Stella McCartney (Chloé), Lord Paul (Caparo), Shahwar Sadeque (consultant IT/Education), Judy Simpson (athlete), Martin Sorrell (WPT), John Sorrell (Newell & Sorrell/Design Council), Harriet Ware-Austin (Amnesty International).

Public sector: Baroness Blackstone (Minister for Education and Employment), Lord Clinton-Davis (Department of Trade and Industry), Dr David Drewry (British Council), Mark Fisher MP (Arts Minister), Andrew Fraser (Invest in Britain Bureau), Tom Harris (Department of Trade and Industry), Roger Liddle (No 10 Policy Unit), Peter Mandelson (Minister without Portfolio), David Quarmby (British Tourist Authority), Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Baroness Symons (Parliamentary Under Secretary), Sir John Kerr (Permanent Under Secretary), Sir Michael Jay (British ambassador in Paris), Claire Fulton, Priya Gupta, and Vivien Life.



Working hours law will be set in stone

By Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

THE Government yesterday pledged that millions of workers will enjoy new rights over their working time under a European directive amid suspicions that the law might be watered down.

Ian McCartney, trade minister, insisted that no one would be forced to work more than 48 hours a week after 1 October and that there would be no "loopholes".

Mr McCartney's comments came after a senior left wing lawyer argued that while there would be no compulsion to work longer hours, the Government would leave the way clear for companies to negotiate extended working time.

The row over working hours erupted ahead of a critical meeting last night between union leaders and Mr McCartney together with Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, over the proposed legislation on union recognition. Trade unionists are concerned that the Government will introduce a law for employers which would make recognition difficult to achieve.

The union delegation, led by John Monks, TUC General Secretary, urged ministers to honour the spirit of Labour's election manifesto. However, the final decision on the contents of the White Paper "Fairness at Work", will lie with the Prime Minister.

The Government could be faced with a high profile strike over union recognition in the run-up to the publication of the White Paper. The dispute involving the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union goes to the heart of a row between old and new Labour ministers over how far the laws of recognition should go.

ADT Fire And Security, a newly merged company, has decided to withdraw representation rights from the union on the basis that it only covers an alleged 7 per cent of the total 4,400 work force. The union claims that it represented 90 per cent of engineers at one of the businesses and more than half at the new group.

Meanwhile, in the debate over working time, Mr McCartney said that three million workers would enjoy a minimum of three weeks' paid leave from October, rising to four weeks from next year. The Government is to reveal details of its plans to introduce the working time directive next week.

The minister said he would be putting forward comprehensive proposals to protect workers so that no one was forced to work unsocial hours.

However, on BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme, John Hensley, a leading barrister, said he believed it would not be difficult for employers to win the agreement of employees to work longer hours despite the directive. He said the full protection needed to be imposed by law and that it would be "very unsatisfactory" if the Government allowed employers flexibility.

Roger Lyons, leader of the MSF union, said thousands of workers died every year as a result of long hours and more protection was badly needed.

No blame for Prescott

By Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

JOHN Prescott was vindicated for the second time in three weeks yesterday, when the Commons Standards and Privileges Committee rejected a Conservative complaint about the non-declaration of a cash donation.

The complaint made by Sir Norman Fowler, the Tory spokesman on the environment, transport and the regions, related to donations of £49,667 from the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust for work done on Labour's regional development policies, in opposition.

Payments received in 1995 were declared by Mr Prescott in the Register of Members' Interests, payments received in 1996 were not declared.

Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards and the Commons investigating officer, told the committee that the rules on registration were clear on one point: "that there should be an element of personal payment, benefit or advantage".

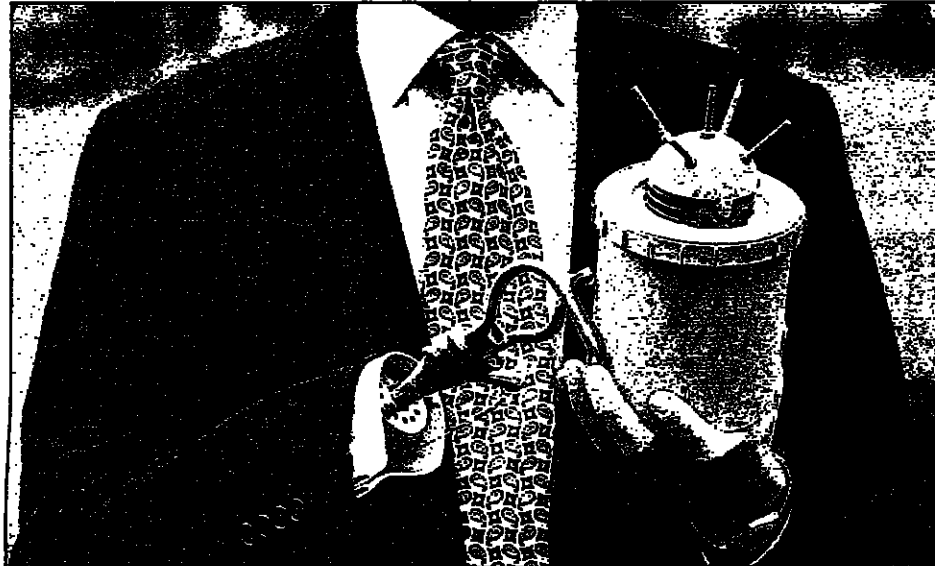
In the recent case relating to Tony Blair's family visit to Silvestone, it was ruled that there had been a benefit and the visit should have been declared by Mr Blair when he was opposi-

tion leader. But Sir Gordon said that Mr Prescott had derived no personal financial gain from the donation - nor had he gained an advantage as an MP or a shadow minister because, at the time, he had been acting as deputy leader of the Labour Party, with no responsibility for the regions.

"In my view, therefore," Sir Gordon said, "the donations were not registrable. It follows that Mr Prescott erred on the side of caution (which, generally speaking, is not to be discouraged) in registering the donation in 1995, and should not be criticised for omitting to do so in 1996."

Government auditors last month cleared the Deputy Prime Minister and his son of any impropriety over the sale of houses in Hull to a firm in which his son had an interest, and yesterday's verdict by Sir Gordon and the committee was welcomed by Mr Prescott, who said that both allegations had been raised in reports carried by the *Sunday Times*.

Yesterday, he said: "It has not been a pleasant experience either for me or for people close to me. I just hope that the *Sunday Times* will now have the decency to correct their factual inaccuracies."



Lethal weapon: Former soldier Chris Moon, who lost his lower right leg and arm in an explosion in Mozambique, holds a replica of a landmine outside the Imperial War Museum yesterday. The museum is running a project with the UN to show examples of anti-personnel landmines

Photograph: Adrian Dennis

Diplomat in landmine crash

By byline

A BRITISH diplomat in Cambodia was injured yesterday when the helicopter he was travelling in crash-landed on a landmine.

Lawrence Pickup, Britain's number two in Phnom Penh, suffered minor cuts and bruises when he and a number of journalists were sent tumbling from the Cambodian army helicopter. Foreign Office officials said the deputy head of mission appeared to have had a lucky escape.

Mr Pickup had been travel-

ling in the north of Cambodia, close to the Thai border, to interview defecting Khmer Rouge guerrillas, who he believed might have had information about the missing landmine clearance expert Christopher Howes.

Mr Howes, from Bristol, went missing two years ago when he was seized by gunmen, believed to belong to the rebels. Defecting Khmer Rouge guerrillas gave up control of the ancient Preah Vihear temple to government forces earlier this week, and the official hoped

someone might have information on Mr Howes.

The MI-8 transport helicopter was coming in to land at the mountain-top Preah Vihear ruins on the Thai border when it became entangled in wire and crash-landed. The aircraft's tail then set off a landmine, an air-force official said. The aircraft was apparently beyond repair.

The news of the accident comes as Foreign Secretary Robin Cook last night opened an exhibition dedicated to depicting the human cost of the use of landmines.

Hague praised by Patten

A POWERFULLY strong endorsement of William Hague was delivered yesterday by Chris Patten, the former Conservative Party Chairman and ex-governor of Hong Kong, writes Anthony Bevins, Political Editor.

In a glowing testimonial, Mr Patten said at a Tory dinner in London: "He has made an excellent start and deserves the loyal and enduring support so fatally denied his predecessor."

Mr Patten - regarded by some Conservative moderates as the best leader the party does not have - praised Mr Hague for holding the centre-right position of the party, for showing patience, and for taking a line on Europe that would avoid the risks of outright confrontation and division within the Conservative ranks.

The blessing could well be pivotal because of the respect Mr Patten attracts from the Tory moderates, and because its recognises the efforts Mr Hague has made to accommodate all elements of the party - while helping to nail down that position.

In his speech to the outgoing Conservative Central Council at Harrogate on Saturday, Mr Hague repeatedly referred to the party's One Nation tradition: something Margaret

Thatcher rejected as "wet".

Last night, Mr Patten said: "William Hague has been wise not to fall into the temptation which has claimed so many of the American Right when faced by a government in Washington doing some of what they believe in."

"Instead of standing where they are, welcoming whenever appropriate, fiscal prudence and market-oriented policies, and fleshing out a principled and coherent approach based on these virtues, many Republicans have veered off towards a right-wing agenda of bills and pieces - anti-abortion here, capital punishment there, with a few zany tax ideas thrown in."

"This is, I suppose, the American variant of the belief in 'clear blue water', the notion that if your opponents do some things you believe in that are popular, you should advocate more extreme things that are not popular. Mr Hague has sensibly avoided this."

"He has led the party from a position in its traditional centre with skill and determination. He possesses formidable parliamentary skill and an engaging unflappability - both qualities for which Harold Macmillan, another moderate Tory leader, was noted."



Ryan's mum was in an accident. Ryan carries the scars.

Last year, when Ryan was 12, his mum was knocked down by a hit-and-run. When she came out of hospital, she was too poorly to look after Ryan, or his little brother. Ryan had to take care of them both.

The demands took their toll. Ryan fell behind with his homework. When his little brother was teased at school, he took revenge with his fists. He ended up being excluded. He doesn't know what he'll do next. Boys like Ryan often turn to crime.

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Secrets frozen in amber for 50 million years

THERE is a may-fly, supposed to live for a day, which has survived for 54 million years, its fragile wings still spread as if in flight. There is a bizarre creature, half cockroach, half praying-mantis, which defeats all scientific classification.

There are two midges frozen in the act of making love, a coitus interruptus which has lasted for 500,000 centuries. There are ancient ants, bees, wasps, termites, ear-wigs, beetles, all from species previously unknown, all minutely and perfectly preserved in amber found in a sand-pit in Picardy, 50 miles north of Paris.

So far 10,000 pre-historic insects have been recovered from this entomological gold-mine, all from extinct and unknown species. At least 500 types have been identified and there may be many to come. The sand-pit is thought to contain as much as 30 tonnes of amber, of which only 1 per cent has been recovered so far.

It is a find of immense scientific importance, because the insects come from a period which is a closed book to entomologists: 10 million years after the disappearance of the dinosaurs but before the development of insect and animal life as we know it today. "It is, if you like, a missing link," said Dr André Nel, of the Natural History Museum in Paris, who is leading the team recovering and classifying the insects.

Until this week, it was uncertain whether the sand-pit itself would survive beyond this month. The former British

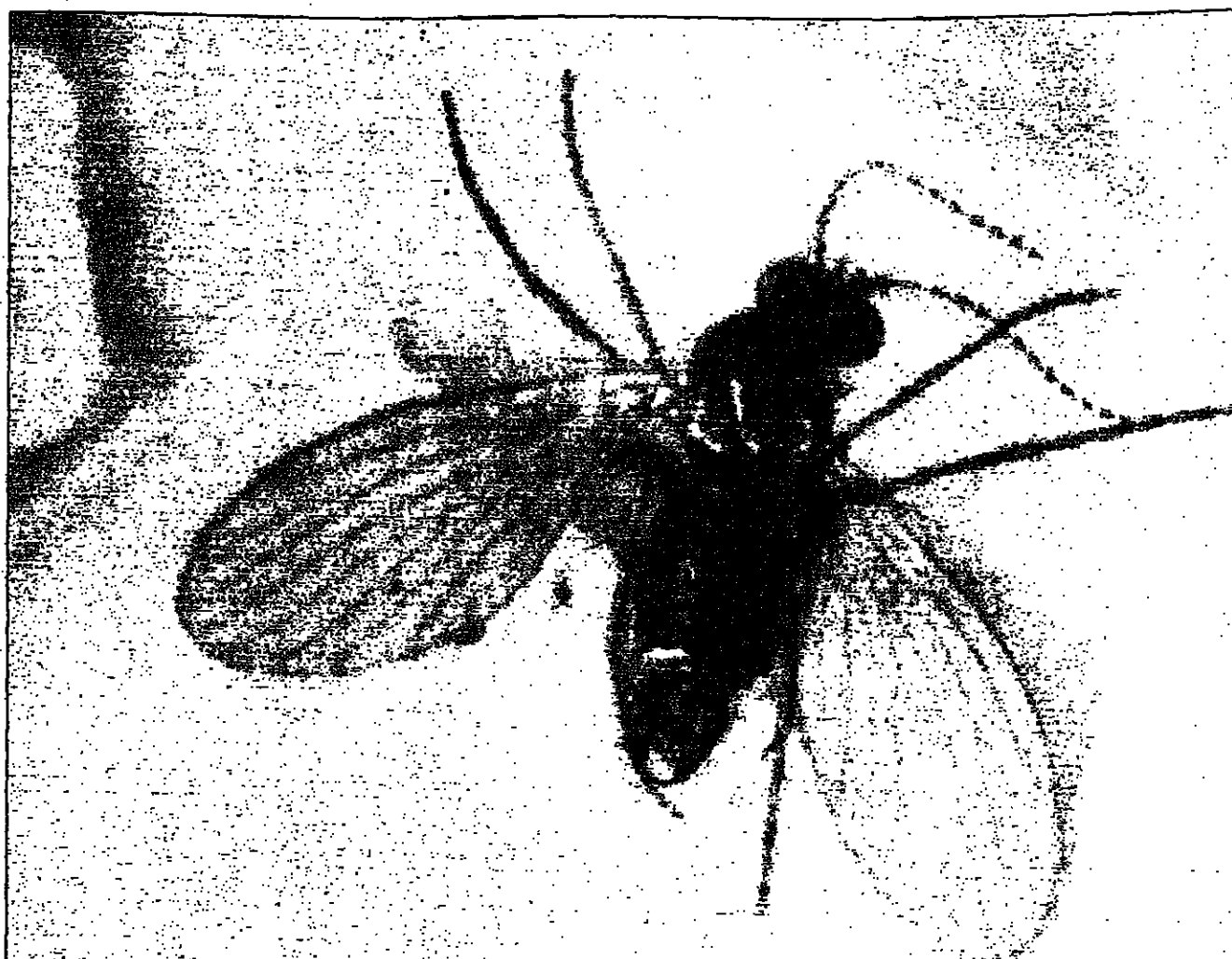
Scientists find missing link with age of dinosaurs, writes John Lichfield

gravel and sand extraction company, Redland, now part of the French group, Lafarge, was due to abandon the pit next week and allow the ground water to rise, concealing the remaining amber. The company has now agreed to make a generous contribution to the scientific investigation of the site, including paying for pumping water from the pit until at least October.

Amber comes from the resin of trees and plants, buried between layers of sediment or sand and then fossilised over thousands of centuries. Any insects trapped and drowned in the resin are preserved forever. Similar finds have been made all over the world. (The scientifically dubious plot of the book and movie *Jurassic Park* is based on the notion that dinosaurs could be recreated from the DNA of their blood, extracted from a contemporary biting insect, preserved in amber).

The find in Picardy was originally made by an amateur paleontologist, Gaël de Ploeg, in 1996. It is the first anywhere in the world from the lower Eocene era, around 53 or 54 million years ago; all previous amber finds have been from much earlier or much later.

When these deposits were laid down, the area was a tropical



Ancient treasure: A moth-fly, one of 10,000 pre-historic insects discovered in the amber of the sand-pit in Picardy

Photograph: Groupe Ambre Entomologie MNHN

ical region, bisected by a vast west-to-east flowing river.

The amber is dug and sieved in small, honey-coloured globules from the sand, gravel and charcoal which formed the ancient river bed. Other fossils have been found in the pit, including parts of unknown

mammals and hundreds of pieces of fossilised crocodile droppings.

"We do not wish to identify the site because we want no trouble with robbers," said Professor Jean-Jacques Menier, in charge of the museum's project to create a permanent

database of the Picardy insects. "Amber is much sought after by some people to make jewellery. This is, in fact, a much too fragile kind of amber for that purpose. But that would not stop the robbers."

The scale of the finds in Picardy - and those expected in

the next few months - has overwhelmed the capacity of the French entomological community. Professor Menier is putting together an international scientific foundation to study and classify the insects, drawing together experts from Britain, Spain, the United

States and Russia. And could these experts, or others, extract DNA and re-create insect species which have not existed for tens of millions of years? Or bring back to life the ancient crocodile or mammals which may have been bitten by the insects? Dr Nel and Professor

Menier can scarcely conceal their merriment. Amber, they explain, is not fully air-tight. Any DNA found in an insect fossilised in amber would be hopelessly incomplete or, more likely, be the DNA of some intruding bacteria. Oh, well, just an idea.

Life imitates art for Mitterrand's daughter

By John Lichfield in Paris

WHEN her father became President of the Republic, she was seven. She must have seen him on the television practically every day of her life for the next 14 years. She was not allowed to tell her school-friends who he was; or who she was. Mazarine Pingeot, 23, the illegitimate, long-hidden but much cherished daughter of François Mitterrand, will give her first television interview on Sunday.

Ms Pingeot has recorded an hour-long programme for TF1, the most-watched French television channel, to mark the publication tomorrow of her first novel, entitled imaginatively *Premier Roman* (First Novel). She is already being boosted by her publisher, and by the French press, as the next Françoise Sagan or Simone de Beauvoir.

In her conversation with Michel Field, one of the top current affairs interviewers on French television, Ms Pingeot talks for the first time about her clandestine childhood and her relationship with her father.



Mazarine Pingeot: Secret life as a child

She also speaks about her experiences since her existence - long rumoured - was revealed by *Paris Match* in 1995, near to the end of President Mitterrand's life.

Her 270-page novel, published by Julliard, is the story of a love affair between Victor and Agathe, two brilliant, unconventional young students at one of the leading French places of higher education, the Ecole Normale Supérieure.

Ms Pingeot has, herself, recently graduated in philosophy from this institution. It was her

father's ambition that she should be a writer.

She has already started on her second novel. Her editor, Betty Miallet, compares her first book to *Bonjour Tristesse*, the novel published by the 18-year-old Françoise Sagan in 1954: "Both have found the same light tone of voice to describe the depths of feeling of youth."

First Novel is said to be partly auto-biographical, though the heroine's father is not a politician but a writer. Here is a brief extract: "Agathe was, on the whole, a frivolous person, attracted by all forms of pleasure, at once sensual and intellectual. Victor was sentimental, illogical, perhaps romantic. What they shared was a love of creating new worlds, of inventing rules, which combined purity with pleasure, freedom with excess..."

The novel describes a journey through Europe by the love-struck pair. To avoid a media feeding frenzy when the novel appears, Ms Pingeot has set out - life imitating art - to an undisclosed foreign destination.

Papon attacks 'political trial'

MAURICE PAPON, the Vichy official charged with crimes against humanity, made a rambling and self-pitying final statement to his trial yesterday in which he accused the prosecution of killing his wife, writes John Lichfield.

Mr Papon, 87, in a 40-minute statement before the jury retired to consider a verdict, said the prosecution had portrayed him as a "cold monster" during his six-month trial.

This was false. The accusation that he had been a willing and zealous enforcer of the deportation of Jews from the Bordeaux area in 1942-44 struck him to "the centre of my heart". He was the victim of a "political trial".

Nonetheless, Mr Papon showed little remorse for the almost 1,600 Jews he helped to deport, ultimately to Auschwitz and their deaths. He dwelt on his own suffering and that of "that great lady", his wife, who died last week. The prosecution's decision to seek a 20 year term had been the *coup de grâce* which had killed her, he said.

In an extraordinary conclusion, bordering on racism, he compared the Jews deported on the basis of his written orders to illegal African immigrants to France sent home on official charter planes. If he was convicted, he said, any French bureaucrat chartering such planes might be prosecuted for crimes against humanity if the immigrants were later "decimated".

The jury, consisting of nine members of the public and the three trial judges, is expected to deliver its verdict in the early hours of today.

Girl, 11, outwits touch therapists

THE SCEPTICAL mind of an 11-year-old has sent one of America's most popular fields of alternative medicine into a spin. It is touch therapy, where practitioners pass their hands over a patient's body, not in fact touching their limbs but allegedly connecting with the human "energy field" around them, writes David Usborne.

Choosing it as the subject of a science project, Emily Ross conducted an experiment to see if the therapists were phonies. Her results were published yesterday by the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

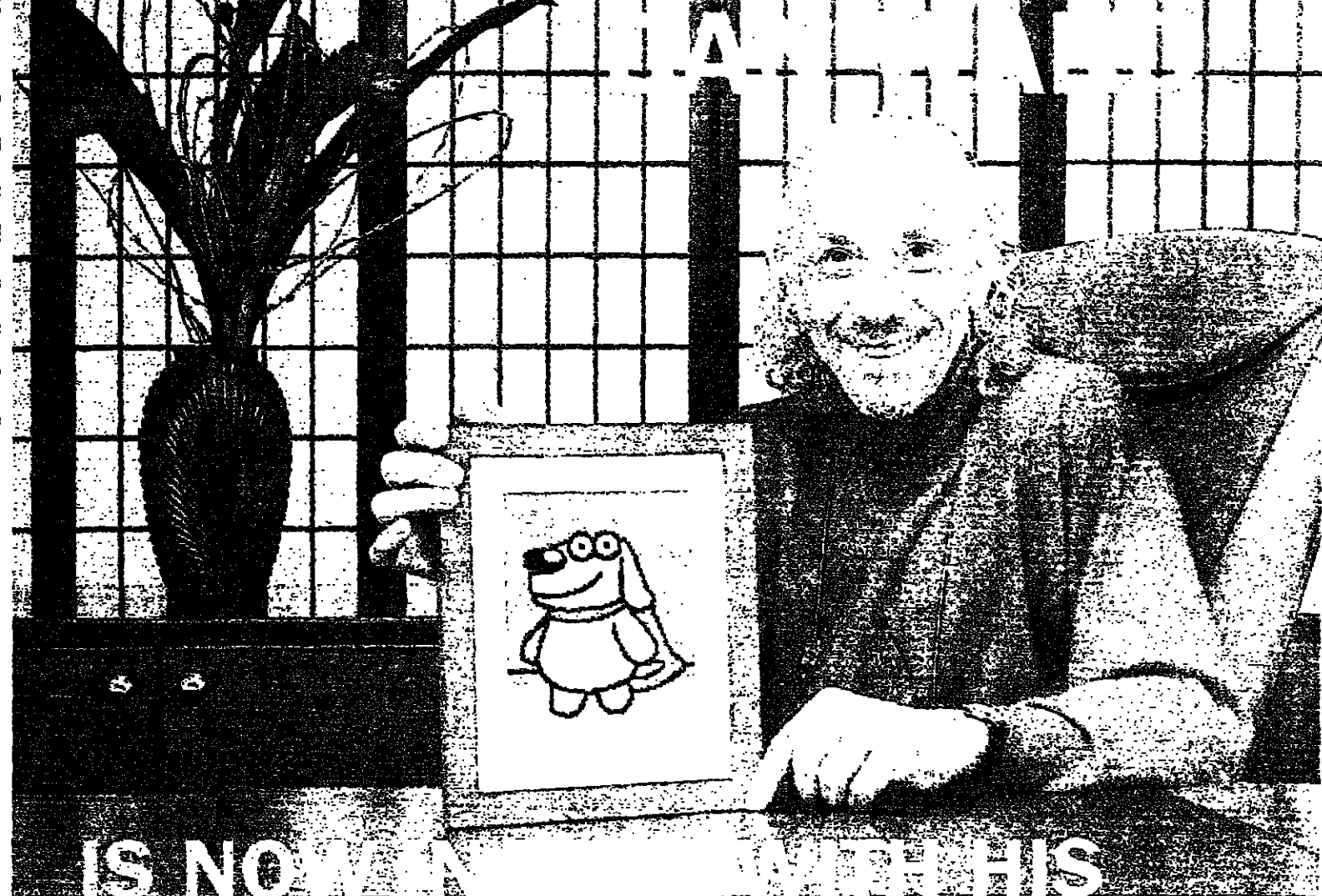
Her approach was super simple. After recruiting 21 practitioners, she sat them behind a screen and had them put their hands through holes to the other side. By flipping a coin, she decided over which of their hands she would place one of her own. Not touching, but within "energy field" range.

Then she asked the obvious question: over which of your hands is my hand hovering? If the therapists could really detect human energy, which is the claim that underpins their work, they would know.

But, oops, they did not. In fact, they got the answer right only 44 per cent of the time. The laws of chance alone would suggest that they would do better. "Since they felt my energy field less than half of the time, then you wouldn't think they had any special ability," Emily said yesterday.



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Botswana swears in third president

FESTUS Mogae was yesterday sworn in as Botswana's third president since Africa's oldest democracy gained independence three decades ago. Mr Mogae assumes power a year before his ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) faces voters in a national election.

Botswana has enjoyed remarkable economic growth during his decade-long tenure as finance minister. The country's vast diamond wealth has made it the world's biggest producer by value terms, estimated at \$1.82bn in 1997. Mr Mogae is under pressure from opposition parties to spend more of the diamond-generated wealth to combat a 21 percent unemployment rate among its 1.5 million people.

— Reuters, Gaborone

Jews gain in Auschwitz

THE Jewish community in Oswiecim (Auschwitz) in southern Poland yesterday recovered a synagogue in the city where Nazi German invaders set up the largest death camp of the Second World War. It is the first Jewish property returned under last year's law on relations with Jewish communities, which allows Poland's nine tiny congregations to recover properties lost during and after the Holocaust.

— Reuters, Warsaw

That sinking feeling

NEW Yorker Suzana Piamenta won't be using the lifts again. On Tuesday, she returned to her Upper East Side apartment after walking her dog and pressed the button for the eighteenth floor where she lives. But the lift headed down to the basement, which was flooded. No sooner had the cabin bumped to a halt than water gushed in through the cracks in the door. She and the dog were rescued after her husband heard her screams and raised the alarm. "It seemed exactly like the *Titanic*," she said.

— David Osborne, New York



My idol: TV presenter Sally Wu Xiaoli with a picture of the Chinese premier, Zhu Rongji. Photograph: Wan Kam-yau

TV star woos the old men of China

By Stephen Vines
in Hong Kong

SALLY WU XIAOLI, a television journalist, has made two important men very happy. The first is China's new Prime Minister, Zhu Rongji, who is now visiting London. He says he is an avid fan. Even happier is her ultimate boss, Rupert Murdoch, who has Ms Wu to thank for getting an official endorsement for his struggling Phoenix television station which broadcasts in China.

The endorsement came immediately after Mr Zhu was selected as China's prime minister two weeks ago. Spotting Ms Wu at an unusually relaxed press conference he declared: "I really enjoy watching her show." Sally Wu, not known for her reluctance, gushed back: "Mr Zhu, I just want to tell you that you are my idol, too."

Only television could have brought together Ms Wu, who is from Taiwan, and the staunch Communist Party member Zhu Rongji. Ms Wu is beamed into Mr Zhu's home by satellite at 9pm when she hosts a daily current affairs programme, *Asian Journal*.

If Mr Zhu wants more of her he can catch the weekly *Sally's Eye on the World*, which airs on Sundays or a brief *News Update*,

which also goes out every evening.

Ms Wu, who is based in Hong Kong, has been with Phoenix more or less since it started in 1996. Before joining the new channel she spent three years with Mr Murdoch's Chinese-language Star television service.

Though not well known in her home country of Taiwan, she

The media has gone to town on the Zhu story, lifting her profile to film-star levels

is gaining fame in China where Phoenix claims to reach 36.2 million households. The news programmes if broadcasts are heavily self-censored, but they are still attractive to Chinese viewers accustomed to a diet of news served up by solemn presenters and shaky visual props.

And Ms Wu is far from solemn. She has a ready smile and draws heavily on her background in entertainment television to liven up the news. She

is coy about her age and family background, but not averse to self-promotion. Famous for handing pictures of herself to other journalists, she was keen to present one to Mr Zhu who told her it "looks great".

Sally Wu is now gaining a reputation as one of the high-flyers in Chinese television. She managed to secure a rare exclusive interview with Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's chief executive, and has set her sights on another exclusive with Zhu Rongji.

Her highly publicised encounter with the new prime minister will certainly do her no harm. The mainland Chinese media was restrained in reporting the Zhu-Wu mutual admiration society, but the Hong Kong media went to town on the story, raising her profile to near film-star levels. This is music to the ears of her bosses at Phoenix, a three-way joint venture company, with most of the programming provided by Mr Murdoch's Star TV.

Phoenix is yet to receive the status of being an officially approved broadcaster in China but has semi-official approval to air its programmes via satellite and cable. Ms Wu may have helped to push the new television station further along the regulatory road.

Hong Kong broadcaster fights for press freedom

HONG KONG'S public broadcaster has unwittingly moved to the front line in the battle for press freedom under the territory's new order, writes Stephen Vines.

Under attack from pro-Peking hardliners who dislike its independence, Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) adopted a defensive position when legislators debated its future last night.

A motion supporting the station's independence was qualified by the legislators who inserted demands for the implementation of controls over the way it is run. The Hong Kong government pledged to provide written guidelines.

Other parts of the media started exercising great caution in reporting Chinese affairs well before the handover of power, but RTHK has main-

tained its reputation for objectivity.

The media generally have become less afraid of the Chinese government, which has been handling Hong Kong affairs with restraint, but its hard-

line supporters in the territory appear to be slightly obsessed by RTHK—they are suspicious of an institution modelled on the BBC. The most outspoken opponent of an independent RTHK is the pro-Peking magazine publisher Xu Si-mia, who has described the station as a "remnant of British rule".

Unfortunately for RTHK it has received less than firm support from the former colony's head of government, Tung Chee-hwa, who has been equivocal in the face of pressure to turn the station into something resembling China's propaganda broadcasting services. On the one

hand he has defended freedom of speech, while on the other he stated that "it is also important for government policies to be positively presented".

Wong Siu-ye, a legislator who often criticises RTHK, has taken the blunt line that because it is owned by the government it needs to follow and propagate the administration's line.

Those wishing to neuter RTHK may however have shot themselves in the foot. Even newspapers considered to be supportive of Peking are backing the station's stance. Yet RTHK journalists have privately expressed fears that they will come under greater control.

Martin Lee, the leader of the Democratic Party, said: "I hope this does not signal a desire to transplant the Communist system of propagandist journalism into Hong Kong."

The Link

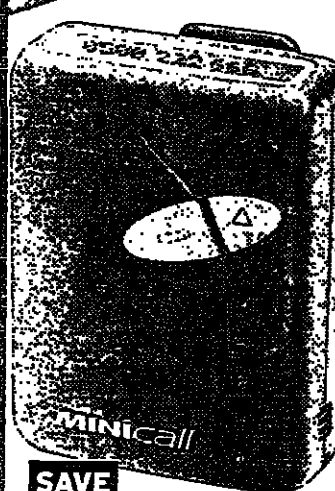
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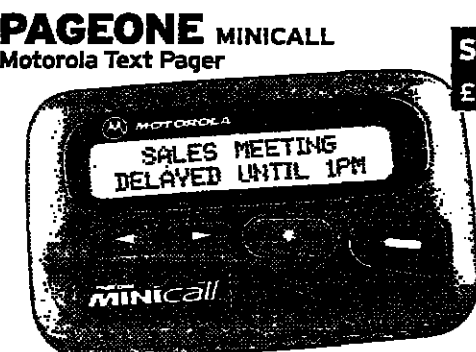


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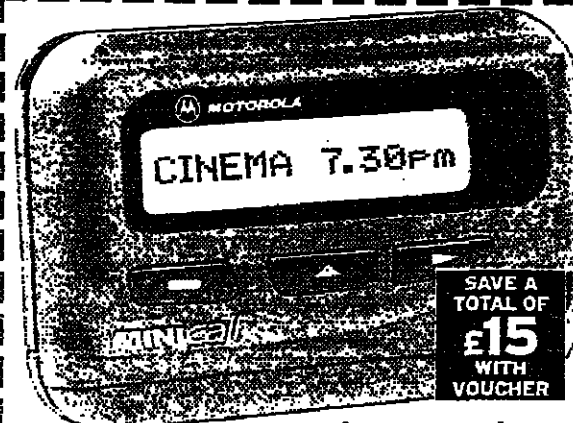


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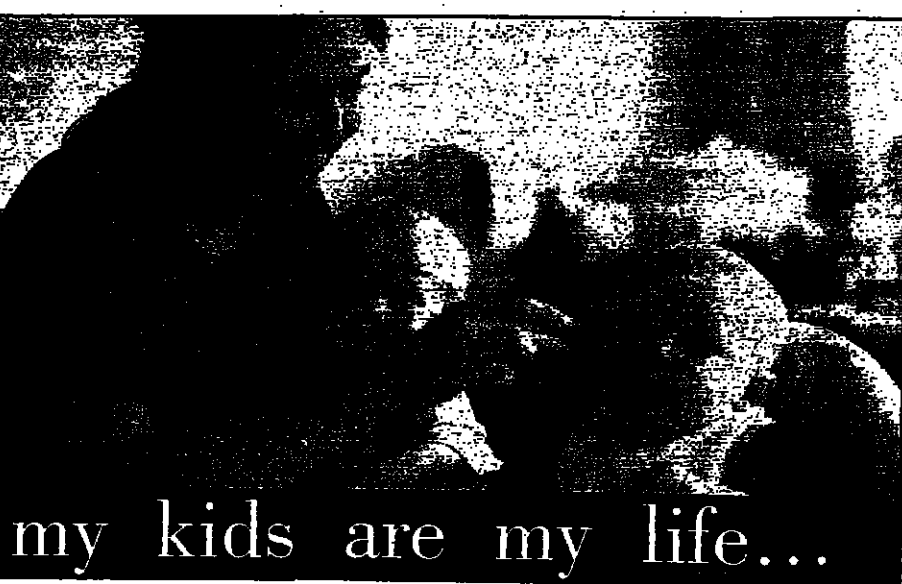
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Out in the open: A man drinking locally manufactured alcohol in Faridabad, India, yesterday as the Haryana state government repealed a prohibition order that had been in force for almost two years. Photograph: Saurabh Das/AP

Hamas vows revenge for killing of bomber

By Patrick Cockburn
in Jerusalem

THE carefully planned assassination of a leader of the military wing of Hamas, the Palestinian militant organisation, has brought threats of a new wave of bomb attacks on Israeli targets.

Palestinian police yesterday identified the body of a man blown up in the West Bank town of Ramallah last Sunday as that of Mohiyedine Sharif, the Palestinian militant wanted by Israel. The police said he was first shot dead and his body planted beside a car packed with explosives which later blew up.

Israel denied yesterday that it was behind the assassination, but Abdullah Aziz Al-Rantisi, a top Hamas leader in Gaza, warned: "Hamas never leaves its members unavenged."

The killing of Yahya Ayash, a military leader of Hamas, in Gaza in 1996 by the Israeli Shin Bet Security Service using a booby-trapped mobile phone, led to four suicide bomb attacks in revenge in which 62 people died.

The elaborate effort made to conceal how Mr Sharif died made it difficult to identify his body. It led police in the autonomous Palestinian enclave of Ramallah to believe at first that he was a Hamas bomber on his way to a target who had accidentally blown himself up. Only yesterday did they establish his true identity and the cause of his death.

Police said: "His father, mother and brothers identified him early this morning. The pathologists said after performing the autopsy that the person was killed before the explosion." They added that Mr Sharif had died from gunshot wounds.

Israel believed that Mr Sharif was behind suicide bombs in Jerusalem last July and September. Six months ago Israeli intelligence tried and failed to kill Khalid Meshal, a Hamas official, with poison gas in Amman, the Jordanian capital. Palestinians are likely to believe that Israeli agents killed Mr Sharif in a similar operation. In the past such assassinations have invariably led to revenge attacks. In a separate development, the Israeli

Inner Cabinet yesterday adopted for the first time the UN Security Council resolution 425 calling for it to withdraw its troops from South Lebanon. It made the withdrawal conditional on the government of Lebanon providing security guarantees to prevent guerrilla attacks against its northern border.

The Lebanese President Elias Hrawi pointed out that 425 demands an "unconditional" retreat by the Israelis.

There is no doubt that the Hizbollah were to blame for Tuesday night's bombing outside an artillery position in southern Lebanon manned by Israel's proxy South Lebanon Army militia, writes Robert Fisk in Beirut. The six victims were all civilians, all of whom were working inside the occupation zone at Kawlawba to reinforce the revetment from which artillery shells have been fired at the Lebanese guerrillas.

The Hizbollah set their bomb to kill those who were helping the Israelis. All the dead were Shias, the same Muslim sect from which the Hizbollah draw most of their recruits.

Mandela coup claims were 'fraudulent'

By Mary Braid
in Johannesburg

SOUTH AFRICAN intelligence service allegations of a coup plot against President Nelson Mandela were completely "fraudulent" and unfounded, a commission of inquiry has found.

Allegations of a plot in which Mr Mandela's ex-wife, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, and former guerrillas from the ANC's old military wing were implicated were presented to President Mandela in February.

The military intelligence report was endorsed by General Georg Meiring, head of the South African National Defence Force and they implicated General Siphiwe Nyanda, the force's highest ranking black officer, who is expected to replace General Meiring when he retires later this year. There is speculation that General Meiring will be asked to resign.

A spokesman for Mr Mandela refused to give details about the report. At the weekend, President Mandela said he always considered the report a "diversion" and possibly a hoax by the apartheid-era old guard.

It appears the President was forced to act on the report after it was leaked to newspapers following the bizarre arrest in early March in Mozambique of Robert McBride, a foreign affairs official, on gun-smuggling charges. Although a plot to

overthrow the government seemed the most outlandish of a host of theories to explain Mr McBride's alleged gun-running, it persisted in the press.

Last Friday, President Mandela announced an inquiry, chaired by Chief Justice Ismail Mohammed and Judge Richard Goldstone, a member of the Constitutional Court and UN prosecutor in the Bosnian and Rwandan war crimes tribunals. It was to concentrate on how the report came to be compiled.

Conspiracy theorists are having a field day but the government believes the "fraudulent" coup only exposes the tensions within the South African armed forces, which are attempting to blend former guerrillas with the apartheid-era government forces. Despite a promising start, integration is going badly.

Where the inquiry's conclusions leaves Mr McBride is unclear. Mr McBride was among those conspirators named in the coup report. Yet this was on Mr Mandela's desk at least three weeks before McBride's arrest.

The government believes that whatever Mr McBride was doing in Mozambique his arrest provided a peg upon which to hang the coup conspiracy. That leaves the possibility that Mr McBride was set up. In another twist it is reported that Vusi Mbatia, with whom Mr McBride was arrested, was the single source for the coup allegations.

Russia's PM linked to Scientologists

By Phil Reeves
in Moscow

RUSSIA'S youthful, inexperienced and - until last week - almost unheard of prime minister-designate was yesterday grappling with potentially damaging allegations linking him with the Church of Scientology.

Just over a week after being yanked out of obscurity by Boris Yeltsin, Sergei Kiriyenko, 35, hit his first unexpected skid patch after a German newspaper, *Berliner Zeitung*, reported that he had attended a one-week Scientology course in Nizhny Novgorod when he was head of a bank three years ago.

The teachings of L Ron Hubbard are regarded with profound suspicion by Russian officials, particularly by the powerful Russian Orthodox church. The same views are likely to be shared by many of the parliamentarians due to vote on Friday over whether to confirm Mr Kiriyenko's nomination.

Yesterday, Mr Yeltsin sought to dampen the protests over his choice of prime minister by inviting the two speakers of parliament and Mr Kiriyenko himself to talks at his residence outside Moscow later today. The invitation appeared to work: soon afterwards, deputies from the State Duma, or lower house, dropped demands for Mr Kiriyenko's nomination to be suspended.

The minister yesterday tried to brush off the *Berliner Zeitung* report, which claimed he arranged for other bankers to attend similar seminars. He was reported to have declared that he appreciated the "simplicity and clarity" of Hubbard's teachings. Later, the paper said, he lost interest in Scientology.

Under quizzing from reporters, Mr Kiriyenko said yesterday it was the "best April Fool's joke yet". But there was no outright denial.

Although Scientology has a sizeable following among Russians, the ruling elite is unlikely to take kindly to the idea of being led by an official who has any links to it. Last year, hostilities erupted in a landmark court case over an Orthodox church leaflet which warned of the dangers of "totalitarian sects", naming, among others, the Scientologists, the Moonies and the White Brotherhood.

For all its distaste, Russia has not cracked down as hard as Germany which, in spite of outcries from human rights groups, US politicians and Hollywood heavyweights including Dustin Hoffman and Oliver Stone, passed tough laws controlling the Scientologists. But they were undoubtedly among the sects targeted by a law signed last year by Mr Yeltsin which restricted the rights of "non-Russian" religions.

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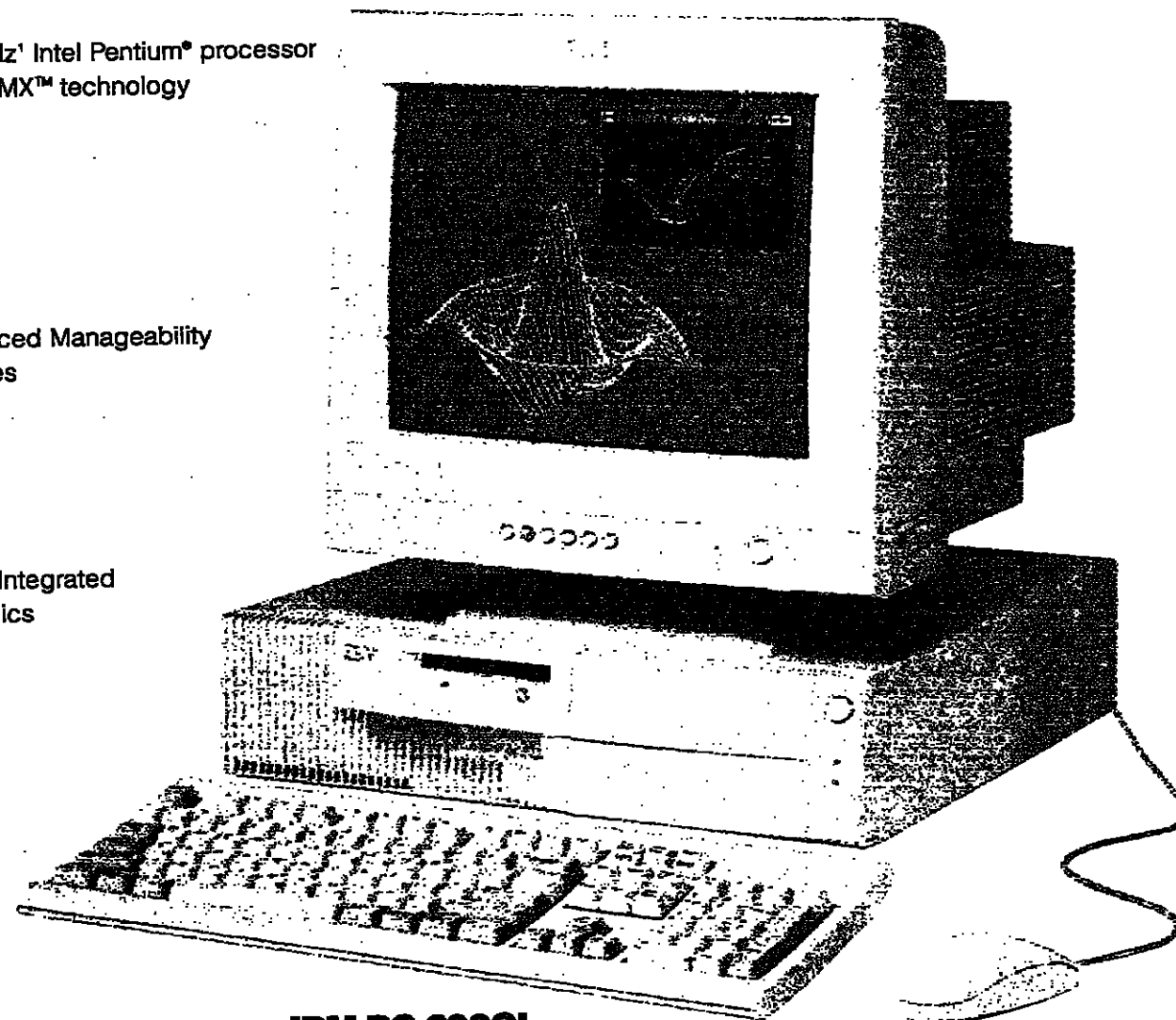
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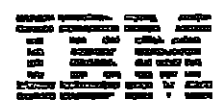
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All the president's women

It is not the 'bimbo eruptions' that could damage Clinton, but allegations that he covered up illegality, writes Mary Dejevsky

EVEN WITH President Bill Clinton thousands of miles away in Africa, the allegations about his sex life have refused to go away. From Kathleen Willey's televised accusations two weeks ago that Mr Clinton kissed and groped her near the Oval Office, via an allegation last weekend about a rape 20 years ago, to the confession by a former Miss America this week that she slept with him 16 years ago, the list of alleged Clinton conquests easily approaches a dozen.

Now, though, there could be a pause. The Arkansas judge, Susan Webber Wright, who is set to preside over court proceedings next month in the sexual harassment suit brought by Paula Jones, has read the

riot act to legal teams on both sides. She is threatening sanctions if they divulge the names of any more women who gave evidence on condition of anonymity.

In truth, the identities of most of the women who figured in the pre-trial hearings are already known. They may have been referred to in transcripts of the hearings as Jane Doe 1, 2, 3, etc, but their namelessness did not last long. With the identification at the weekend of the alleged rape victim, Juanita Broadrick, the last mask fell.

This parade of women alleging a sexual relationship with Bill Clinton was precisely what his campaign managers had feared when he ran for President six years

ago. Graphically termed "bimbo eruptions" by the aide, Betsey Wright, who was entrusted with deflecting them, the accusations were successfully sidelined, partly by Mr Clinton's admission that he was no innocent, partly by dint of discrediting the accusers.

Now, thanks largely to the persistence of Paula Jones, the "bimbo eruptions" are back with a vengeance. Her civil suit is due before the court in Little Rock, Arkansas, on 27 May unless the judge accedes to a plea from the Clinton camp that there is no case to answer.

Even if the case proceeds, however – and it would be difficult, politically, for the judge to throw it out – the damage to Mr Clinton

may be limited. While Ms Jones's central accusation has remained consistent since she initiated the case in 1994 – that Mr Clinton invited her to a hotel room, tried to kiss her, dropped his trousers and asked her for oral sex, which she refused – the grounds for her claim have shifted to include psychological harm and career damage. Even so, legal specialists say, her case will be hard to sustain.

This is one reason why Ms Jones's lawyers have called other women from Mr Clinton's past to testify. They want to prove a pattern of behaviour that would make Ms Jones's account more credible. This tactic has not been entirely successful, however, as several confessed to consensual rela-

tionships with Mr Clinton and denied impropriety on his part.

The real risk for Mr Clinton lies with the criminal investigation being conducted by the independent prosecutor, Kenneth Starr. Instituted over the Whitewater land deal (see below), the inquiry was recently extended to include the accusation that Mr Clinton had had an affair with Monica Lewinsky and induced her to lie about it.

The case was included in the Whitewater investigation because it appeared to conform to another pattern of behaviour: Mr Clinton's alleged use of his power to cover up illegality. The most damaging question in the Lewinsky case is not whether he had an affair and lied about it, but

whether he tried to "buy" her silence with good jobs.

This is where the parade of women who have testified, mostly harmlessly, in the Paula Jones case could prove lethal. Called to attest to Mr Clinton's tendency to bad sexual behaviour, at least some inadvertently suggested another tendency: his concern to keep the relationships secret.

In the case of Ms Lewinsky (this could amount to a crime. Were she to say that Mr Clinton suborned her to commit perjury, he would be in big trouble. Not big enough, probably, given his popularity with voters, to convince Congress to impeach him, but big enough to tarnish his presidency irrevocably.

ON THE RECORD: WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT HIM AND WHAT HE SAYS ABOUT THEM



HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

Aged 50, the one and only wife. Married since 1976. She said in January 1998: "It's a vast right-wing conspiracy." He said, on television, in 1992: "I have acknowledged causing pain in my marriage."



DOLLY KYLE BROWNING

Aged 51. High school sweetheart, now a lawyer in Texas. She says they had an on-off affair from school days and she chronicled it in fictional self-published book, *Purposes of the Heart*. He says: she was jealous and resented the fact that he had never slept with her.



Bill Clinton: Trouble on the home front Photograph: Reuters



GENNIFER FLOWERS

Aged 48. Former reporter, singer and Arkansas state employee. She says she had "an ongoing relationship for many years" (from 1977 to 1989) with Clinton: "the truth is, I loved him". He says they did not have a 12-year affair but did have sex once, in 1977.



ELIZABETH WARD GRACEN

Aged 37. Miss America in 1982, television actress. A friend said Elizabeth told her how Clinton forced her to have sex in 1982. She said in 1992 that she did not have any liaison with Clinton. She says in 1996 that she did have sex with Clinton in 1983 – "a very bad error of judgement". He says: nothing.



PAULA JONES

Aged 31. Former Arkansas state employee, suing Clinton for sexual harassment. She says Clinton invited her to an Arkansas hotel room in 1991 and asked her to perform oral sex, which she refused to do. He says nothing of the kind happened and he can't recall ever meeting her.



KATHLEEN WILLEY

Aged 52. Former air stewardess, White House volunteer and Clinton campaign worker. She says Clinton tried to kiss and grope her when she went to the Oval Office to ask for a job in November 1993. He says: "There was nothing sexual about it."



MONICA LEWINSKY

Aged 24. Former White House trainee. She said (in secretly taped confidences to a friend) that she had 18-month affair with Clinton. She says (under oath) that there was no sexual relationship. He says (on television, repeated under oath): "I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Ms Lewinsky."



CHRISTY ZERCHER

A former stewardess on the presidential jet aircraft, Air Force One. She said (to the tabloid *Star* newspaper last week) that Clinton fondled her during a flight. He says: nothing.

OFF THE RECORD: THE ONES WHO ARE SAYING NOTHING



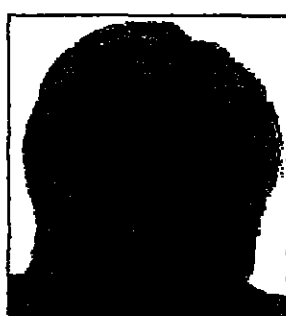
JUANITA BROADRICK

A nursing home supervisor. A friend said (in 1992) she gave him a graphic description of being raped by Clinton in 1978 during a conference in Arkansas. She says (under oath) that nothing happened. The White House says the allegations are "outrageous and false".



BETH COULSON

Lawyer appointed to Arkansas appeal court by Clinton in 1987. Rumours say her rapid promotion was due to a relationship with him. She says (under oath) there was no sexual relationship. Clinton says he stayed at her house, but only as a friend.



MARILYN JO JENKINS

Arkansas power company worker. An state trooper says he took her to the Arkansas governor's mansion several times in 1992. She says the meetings were innocent. Clinton says they met several times as friends and colleagues.



SHEILA LAWRENCE

Widow of Larry Lawrence, former US ambassador to Switzerland and Democratic Party donor. A Washington columnist said she had an affair with Clinton. She says (under oath): "It's completely untrue", and is suing. He says there was no relationship.

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Whitewater case set to run and run

The prosecutor's investigation could outlast the presidency, reports Mary Dejevsky

THE Whitewater investigation, which has now been running for four years at a cost to the American taxpayer running into tens of millions of dollars, began as an inquiry into a speculative (and failed) Arkansas land deal in which Bill and Hillary Clinton invested in the Eighties. It has now expanded to include the accusation that Mr Clinton had an affair with a White House trainee, Monica Lewinsky, and prevailed upon her to lie about it under oath. And it could run and run.

The common thread is abuse of power. The question is whether Mr Clinton used his power, first as attorney general and state governor of

Arkansas and then as President of the United States, to pervert the course of justice. At issue in the main Whitewater investigation is whether Mr Clinton traded his influence as governor for financial gain – by obtaining loans for himself and others – and whether, a decade later, the White House illegally obstructed police inquiries – by concealing records and buying off or destroying those who had information.

Hillary Clinton is also implicated in the Whitewater inquiry. She was a partner in the Rose law firm in Arkansas involved in the land deal, and her documentary records have had a habit of vanishing and reappearing at crucial stages in the

investigation, bringing accusations that she orchestrated a cover-up.

In the past month, the probability has increased that the investigation, headed by the independent prosecutor, Kenneth Starr, could outlast Mr Clinton's presidency.

One of the key figures, a former Arkansas businessman, Jim McDugall, died in prison. Then this week the appeals court ruled that a decision on whether to release the papers of the late Vincent Foster, deputy White House counsel from 1992-3, should go to the Supreme Court. (The legal status of papers belonging to deceased people is moot.)

Mr Foster was found shot in July 1993, and while a succession of inquiries has established that his death was suicide, conspiracy theories abound. Some say that he knew too much about Whitewater, others that he was romantically involved with Hillary Clinton, but no evidence has been produced to support either theory.

If Mr Starr believes he has evidence that Mr Clinton tried to pervert the course of justice, his next step is to refer it to the Senate judiciary committee which could consider impeachment. Now, though, the case is likely to be held up until the question of Vincent Foster's papers is resolved.

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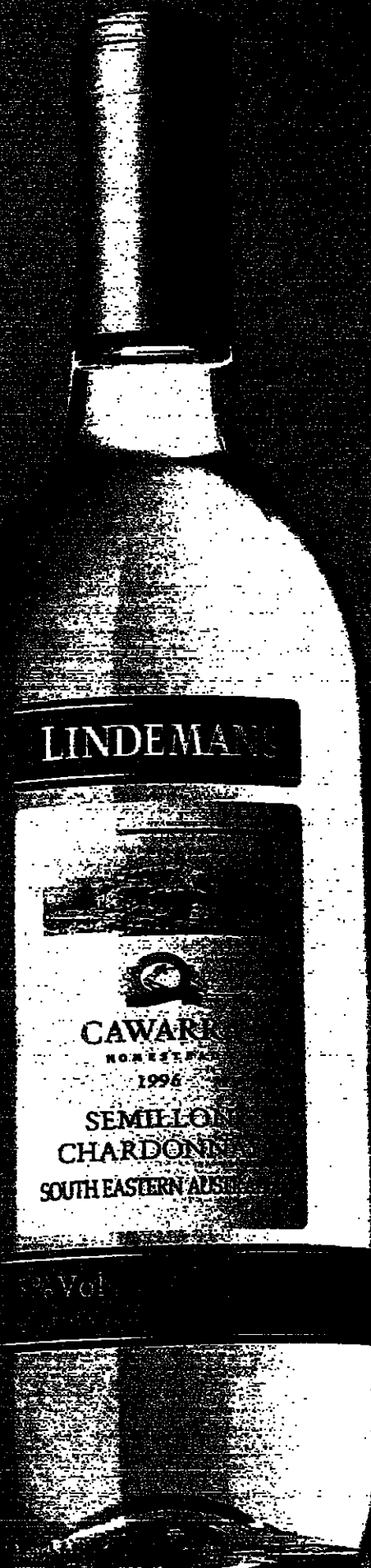
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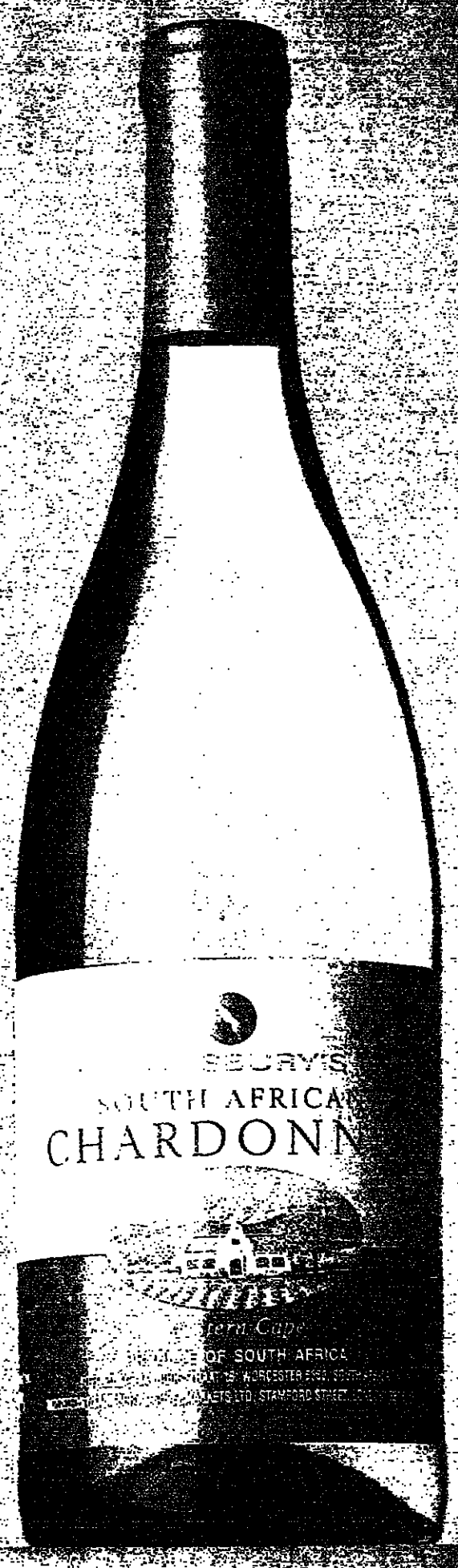
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THE INDEPENDENT

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Work matters, hours don't

THE BRITISH work longer hours than most. Is it time for us to "get a life"? The Government seems to think so. It is going to implement the European directive which, more or less, will limit us to working 48 hours a week. As a spokesman for the trade unions put it: "Workers need legal protection on health and safety but also on how many hours they work, so they can have a life outside work."

We wouldn't be so sure about the last bit. Of course no one should be intimidated or forced to work for excessively long days against their wishes. Transport workers and hospital doctors should be prevented from damaging our health as well as their own. But there are powerful reasons why the Government shouldn't get in the way of those who happily choose to work - or appear to work - barmy hours.

There are groups who should clearly be exempt. Freelance "portfolio workers" are often a nervous and harried lot, driven by the most potent fear of all - losing their job. They often choose to work every hour God gives for reasons of security. As the song says, they make hay while the sun shines and make love when it rains. The telephone may not ring tomorrow. It isn't up to government or unions to prescribe their security and income - no central authority knows enough about their endless balancing act.

Then there are those for whom long hours represent giving rather than taking. They are their own bosses, and, as they will tell you, you can be your own worst boss. There is no such thing as a 9 to 5 entrepreneur. A country in which people are forbidden to work themselves half to death trying to become millionaires would be a failed one.

Then there are those who just look like they work really hard. They may not be producing much at their workstations but they flee to the sanctum of long hours in the office to avoid confronting something terrifying at home, maybe loneliness or a disintegrating relationship. The Government should not underestimate the size of this latter group. Britain may well have one of the longest working weeks in Europe but it also has one of the highest divorce rates: many of those breakdowns are caused by work-related stress and insufficient leisure. But we are odd animals and many people stay together because of long hours apart. No one, not even ministers, should presume to know the secrets of millions of hearts.

There's another bogus group of "hard workers", those whose working hours consist of, as far as possible, being at work five minutes before the boss arrives and leaving five minutes after the boss leaves. If their boss has the same approach as they do to impressing his boss, and his boss in turn has the same attitude, then a cycle of "over-work" is set up. It is a familiar but transparent part of many work cultures; and if legislation could end that nonsense, so much the better.

Overwork is often a male thing, driven by the macho, competitive, hall-sy atmosphere to be found in some professions, and by the extension of the working day to the pub or wine bar where the continuation of work by other means can take place and where flirting, networking and bitching can thrive. Women, particularly women with children, are likelier to finish their work promptly and efficiently; and then go home.

None of these things really needs to be or could be regulated by the Government. But what about those employees who have, or want to have, a life - and who are looking for help in balancing work and play? For them there are better solutions than those offered by the European Union and the DTI.

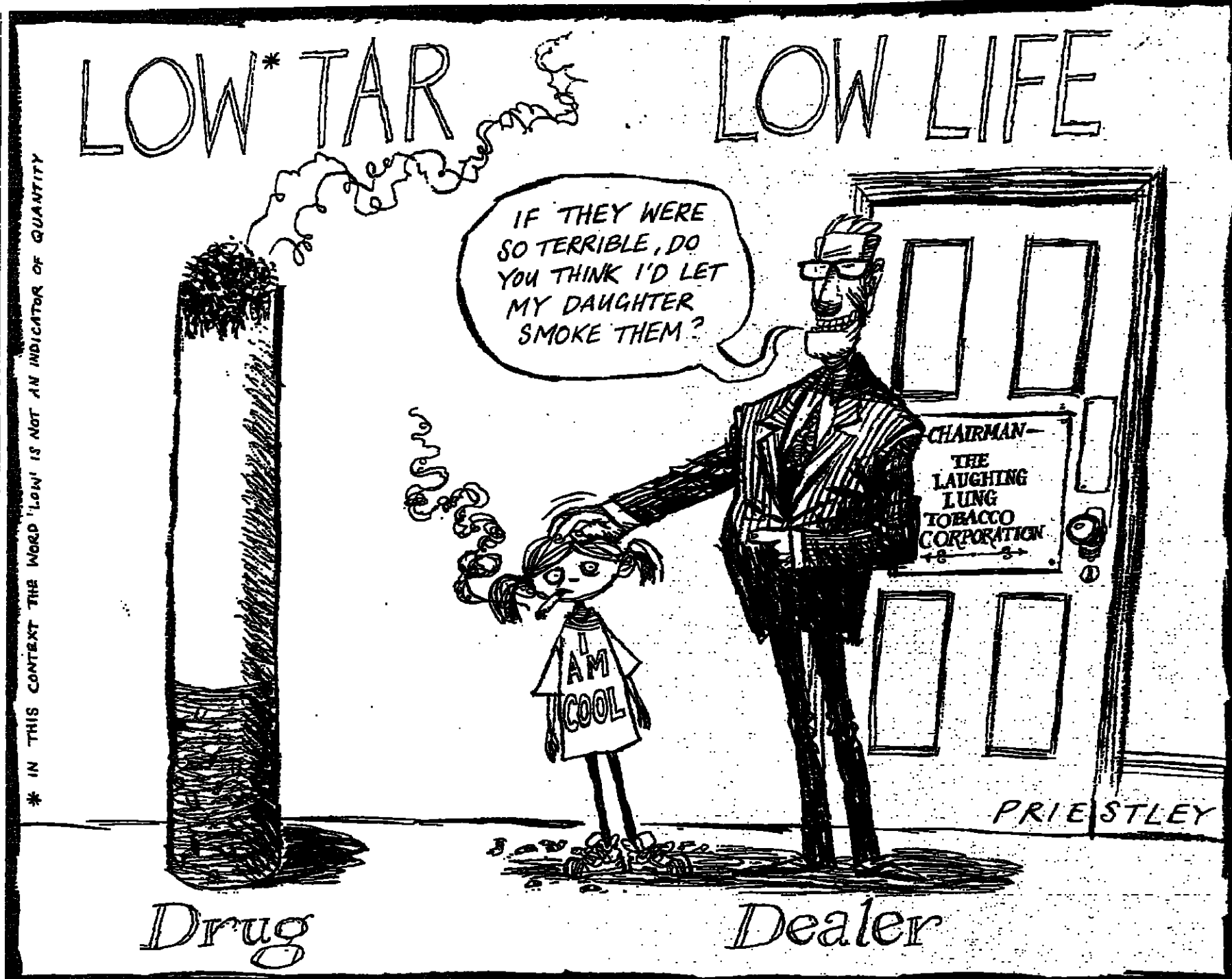
First are the slow, sure, changes that are taking place in the labour market. Cultural and social change often makes legislation redundant. More and more women are entering the workforce and are challenging old male customs. The loudest voices in favour of reform of Parliament (where all the worst practices find an indulgent home) have been female. Part-time working is much more commonplace. Working from home too. Now you can do your shopping on a Sunday and your banking from your study. Flexitime is the norm and fewer and fewer of us live under the petty tyranny of "clocking on". There is a growing plurality in work.

And there is the sanction of the market. A rotten workplace will deter the best staff. A responsible employer will notice this. Long hours, real or fabricated, do not necessarily mark a productive organisation. Watching staff do nothing and claim overtime while they wait for the boss to go home can't be pleasant. Many employers and line managers already adopt a libertarian approach to setting a target for their staff and allowing them to achieve it in the way they desire, rather than stressing the number of hours they have to put in. If someone can do a week's work in 20 hours that should be good news for all. They should be encouraged. Who knows, it might be one way to start dealing with the super-strength pound. And maybe then we could all get a life.

Injustice seen to be done to Josie

IF THE law can be an ass, then its agents can be donkeys. Courts and tribunals make all kinds of cash awards. So do various civil and criminal agencies. They often appear random. A huge award here is followed by a derisory payment there, with no sense that behind them lie any coherent principles.

So it isn't just mild puzzlement that greets the refusal of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board to augment the puny annual sum paid Josie Russell as the surviving victim of that murderous attack which killed her mother and sister. We feel angry too at the whole system - at its vagaries, its absence of rationale, its silence. Once again, questions are raised about decisions taken by a quango. Yet how is the board's astonishing non-extensive of its discretion in the Russell case to be challenged - except by using the very legal system which otherwise seems so haphazard? Justice is a seamless web. The public's faith in policing, detection, prosecution and disposal is harmed by decisions - wherever they are made - that injure fundamental ideas of fairness. This is one of them.



The strong pound

BRITAIN'S exporters cannot compete on cheap labour. Today's export market is for capital-intensive products backed by heavy research and thoughtful design. To hold our own, we need as much capital as our competitors. Just as the high pound and high interest rates of the early Eighties wiped out the cash-flow of exporters and turned our traditional trade surplus in manufacturing into huge deficit, so it will today.

The Labour governments of the Sixties and Seventies turned huge payments deficits into surpluses by encouraging investment in manufacturing. It is open to the present government to do the same. It can be done the hard way by using fiscal policy instead of interest rates alone to regulate the economy. This would reduce interest rates and bring the pound down to a competitive level. Or it could do it in the easier way by negotiating with our European partners a more competitive rate for the pound in the Exchange Rate Mechanism (which we did not do in 1989).

Failing one or other of these, after the creation of a single currency for Europe, a trading area larger than the USA, interest rates will have to go up even higher to prevent a steady flow from pound to euro and in due course, even that will not stem the flow and there will be yet another sterling crisis, and an undervalued pound, setting us off again on the dreary wage-price spiral.

And by that time it will be too late for the government to recover before the next election.
Sir FRED CATHERWOOD
Cambridge

STERLING'S value against the German mark increased by 20 per cent between May 1996 and May 1997. It has since gone up a further 10 per cent but it is worth placing on record that the sterling time-bomb was a Conservative inheritance. I raised the issue regularly in the Commons - only to be brushed away by Ken Clarke, who told me in March 1997: "We have a floating exchange rate at the moment and, for that reason, I do not control its level. Finance ministers do not control the level of exchange rates in today's deregulated

foreign exchange markets."

His answer would cause smiles in the finance ministries of Europe, the United States or even Switzerland, where a mix of measures have been used by policy-makers to determine currency values. If Gavin Davies is right (column, 30 March) and the Bank of England has "concluded that about seven-eighths of the [pound's] appreciation cannot be explained by monetary or other measurable factors" perhaps it is time the Bank hired economists for whom currency value is not an unfathomable mystery.
DENIS MACSHANE MP
(Rotherham, Lab)
House of Commons

HAMISH McRAE may relax and enjoy the high pound when he travels abroad (Comment, 1 April), but I would guess that he also likes high interest rates because he is, as I am, a saver and not a borrower.

High interest rates keep inflation down by discouraging borrowing, but the people they discourage most are business people who calculate the cost of credit. For retail customers the costs of credit are often disguised in the price, and people are more easily tempted to buy if they do not have to pay anything at the time.

We will never get interest rates down to continental levels if we don't get consumer borrowing down. So why not make retailers spell out the cost of credit and/or set a legal minimum downpayment? There would be an outcry from the trade and from finance companies - but are they really more worth courting than export industries?
H B WIENER
London NW11

Vaccine risk

THE closed meeting of the Medical Research Council which reported on the MMR vaccine against measles, mumps and rubella ("Children's vaccine is safe, say experts", 25 March) has not laid to

rest the anxiety of parents.

Sir Kenneth Calman is reported to have ruled out making the three vaccines available separately for those parents who would prefer that method of treatment. Yet separate-dose vaccination would in time provide a control group against which the present opinion of the MRC could be tested. The refusal to allow the separate dose method even if paid for privately appears to show a "no choice" attitude which is not acceptable in a democratic society.

It is essential that this problem should not be dealt with in the way BSE was dealt with in the 1980s, when data was withheld, research stifled and experts who did not support the official line were silenced. Our children are too important for us to take such risks.
J A WALLER
N M WALLER
St Albans, Hertfordshire

Millennium bug

TONY BLAIR'S proposal for 20,000 "bug busters", trained for £1,300 each to combat the year 2000 computer problems is naive. He is to be congratulated for lending his authority to the Y2K awareness campaign, but he is being badly advised.

I was world-wide leader of Year 2000 services for Deloitte Consulting for 18 months to December 1997. In my experience, 75 per cent of all business IT systems need to be changed to avoid Year 2000 problems. About 50 per cent of departmental systems (such as stock control, laboratory data capture, packing and labelling) need to be changed. But the worst problem is that some 3 per cent to 5 per cent of "embedded" systems (controllers in electronic equipment) will fail in a serious way unless they are replaced.

There are billions of such systems in existence and, unfortunately, it is not generally possible to tell whether particular equipment contains a com-

puter-based calendar and may fail. The clock may not be visible to the user of the equipment (as in some engine controllers). The clock may not even be used, but the equipment may fail its "power-up self-test" if the clock goes wrong. Equipment with identical model numbers may have different components, so you cannot rely on the results from a "representative" test. Manufacturers' assurances may be misleading or incorrect. Much equipment may be impossible to access, or difficult to test.

The business risks extend beyond individual systems and equipment. Will your suppliers fail? Will there be water, gas, electricity, telephones, transport?

Finding and correcting the problems is a skilled task. It needs to be done with greater professionalism than was used to build the systems or equipment the first time round. We are about to suffer from the consequences of believing that developing computer systems is a job that can be done reliably by poorly trained and poorly qualified staff. We will not solve these problems by creating an army of worse-trained and unqualified people and expecting them to make detailed changes on impossibly short timescales.

The money should be spent instead on training people to help draw up contingency plans, and on directing resources into the most vital areas of the national and international infrastructure.
MARTYN THOMAS
Bath

Lords of misrule

YOUR REPORT "People's Lords to replace hereditary peers" (1 April) reminds me of Lloyd George, who 88 years ago said that the members of the House of Lords were "ordinary men ... chosen accidentally from the ranks of the unemployed".
DAVID BARRON
London SW15

'Safer' cigarettes

Your report (1 April) about the promotion of low-tar cigarettes by the tobacco industry reminds me of an informal meeting at the Royal College of Physicians 30 or more years ago between members of the committee which had prepared its 1962 report on smoking and health and a group of medical advisers to the industry, at which we were asked to express an opinion about the possible formulation of a safer cigarette.

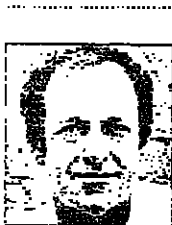
We refused to commit ourselves to any forecast of the effects of reduction in either tar or nicotine content, pointing out that this could be discovered only by observation, over a number of years, of the incidence of smoking-related diseases in smokers of modified and unmodified cigarettes. We were aware that to commit ourselves to any view would encourage unjustified claims of "safer" cigarettes.

I remember remarking that evidence suggested that the component of tobacco smoke most responsible for the appeal of cigarettes to smokers, nicotine, was one of the least harmful, and so the least harmful cigarettes might well have a high nicotine and a low "tar" content, since smokers of such cigarettes would get their "fix" from fewer cigarettes, and be less exposed to the harmful components of the "tar". I doubt whether there will ever be a study of this possibility; such a study is unlikely to be encouraged by the industry, whose objective is to sell as many cigarettes as possible.

J G SCADDING FRCP
Emeritus Professor of Medicine,
National Heart and Lung Institute,
Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire

Too many mayors

IT SEEMS that London is destined to have two Mayors - or rather a Lord Mayor and an ordinary one. Of course, the former's patch is only the Square Mile and his duties largely ceremonial, but try explaining that to visitors from abroad. Any title - Governor, Director, Chief Executive, Lord High Panjandrum - anything but Mayor and this farcical confusion could have been avoided.
JIM TRIMMER
Isleworth, Middlesex



MILES KINGSTON

A heart-warming story from the golden age of irritating interruptions

I BRING YOU a story today which is very modern in its flavour but very traditional in its lessons, a story which is bang up to date yet timeless, a story which is for now yet for all time, post-modernist yet old-fashioned...

A reader writes: Why don't you just tell us the story and let us make up our own mind about all that?
Well, perhaps I will, at that. The story I am about to relate concerns a man called Martin Trapp, who was an expert on showbiz history. You know how these days it has become very fashionable to be an expert on showbiz history without actually being a showbiz person?

A reader writes: Is that a real question or a rhetorical one? Do you want us to answer it, or just to accept it as a trick of style?
Nix, it's just a trick of style, or a stylistic device, as I would prefer to call it. The fac-

tor of the matter is that we have now come to look back on the golden age of showbiz, especially American showbiz, as a well, a golden era, and therefore the era of George and Ira Gershwin, Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw, Frank Sinatra and Peggy Lee, the Boswell Sisters and the Marx Brothers, has attracted copious historians who have dubbed the whole showbiz world as...

A reader suggests: The Land of Hope and Crosby?
Very nice. I like that. I'll remember that and maybe use it. Now, will you shut up?

A reader writes: No.
This showbiz world, which has become known as the Golden Age of Showbiz, has attracted its own gang of chroniclers and experts. To be an expert on the history of musicals might once upon a time have been considered a sign of effeminacy in a man. Nowadays it is considered almost as re-

spectable as being a chef or a hairdresser. You get people who are experts on the history not just of musicals, but of animated cartoons, of comedy scriptwriting, of film musicals, of songwriting of silent films and...

A reader interrupts: Yes, yes, we get the point. Benny Green, Mark Sykes, Gerald Kaufman, Sheridan Morley and so on. None of them can sing a note but they can all tell you which song comes from which musical.
Don't forget Larry Adler. Larry Adler not only knows all those things but he was there as well.

A reader contributes: And George Gershwin was usually on hand to say, "Only you could have said that, Larry!"

Be that as it may, there was a man called Martin Trapp who was one of the best all-round historians of the era. He had written a life of Harold Arlen, done a history

of Jack Benny and compiled a glossary of musicals which had never made it to Broadway. He was in short a walking encyclopaedia and a pain in the neck to sit beside at mealtime. He was also much in demand on places like Kaleidoscope...

A reader starts losing his nerve: For God's sake get on with it! We're over halfway through and you haven't started the story yet! But most of all Martin Trapp was in demand for obituaries and death notices. Whenever a survivor from the golden age of showbiz died, Martin Trapp could be called on to supply a glowing tribute, a reasonable but radiant résumé, a heartfelt hymn of praise for someone whose like we shall not see again, a last icon from the great days of whatever it was. Martin's trade was in other people's demise.

A reader starts getting pedantic: Shouldn't that be "demises"?

No. Well, maybe it should be, but who cares? In any case, Martin Trapp may never have known the golden age of showbiz personally, any more than A L Rowse had personally known Shakespeare's epoch or...

A reader tries to help out: ...Or Shakespeare had known A L Rowse's times? Quite so. But Martin Trapp did at least live in a golden age of obituaries. And one day he became possessed by a tremendous desire to know what people would say about him when he died. He longed to know what HIS obituary would look like.

A reader writes: But surely he could only know that if he died?

Yes, indeed. Or, of course, if he faked his own death.
A reader writes: And did he?
Find out tomorrow. And try to keep quiet next time.

Tony has some little lambs, but they never ever bleat



ANNE
MCELVOY

LABOUR'S STRANGELY QUIET BACKBENCHERS

THREE backbenchers have been caught out by a newspaper giving identical replies in a telephone interview about the Budget. We can only wonder that so few of them were on cue. Some performance-monitoring unit in Millbank is doubtless busy researching why the take-up rate was so low.

Since they were elected last May, I have watched New Labour backbenchers – people I know to be lively, intelligent and irreverent in private – turn into enfeebled drones. Tony Blair used to urge his supporters to think the unthinkable. Once in Parliament, however, they are told to shut up until their unthinkables have been cleared in triplicate. As they read out their model answers, ask the right questions and compile their “home-made” publicity posters in accordance with the guidelines – “You will need a large piece of white card, a thick black marker pen and a photogenic child” – no cliché is left unchained, no repetition unrecycled.

Dull politicians have always relied on verbal props to help them survive the trauma of being asked what they believe. Labour used to mock Tory backbenchers who bowed and scraped to Margaret Thatcher. But Mr Blair's footsoldiers should be a different breed. Far younger than the Tories, they are, on the whole, well-educated products of a meritocracy and not the result of union-dominated selection. On paper, they appear to be an exciting lot. All the sadder that they have become the supine recipients of spin-doctors' orders, as dependent on their pagers for instruction as Linus on his comfort-blanket.

Recently, on a talk-show panel, I encountered one of the brightest stars of the 1997 intake. Just before the show started, she disappeared to the Ladies where I found her earnestly studying her blepser for last-minute guidance. The results were predictable: on handling of the economy, “Avoid the boom and bust of Tony years.” When challenged by a Conservative on any inconsistency, “We're not going to take any lessons from the Tories on...” (fill in as appropriate and quite often as inappropriate). The phrases “We've got to get people off welfare and into work,” and “A society for the many not the few,” were delivered in that strange sing-song rhythm which comes from saying the same thing too often. They might as well go into tele-sales. Turn the sound down on your television when a house-trained Labour backbencher starts speaking and you can finish the sentence for them.

Now I'm sure that Alastair Campbell would say that my objections are C-R-A-P. New Labour has to get its message across. Consistency is all. The Tories started to go wrong when they lost the plot and gave the im-

pression of being in disagreement with each other. Look at that (expletive deleted) Brian Sedgmore – all over page two of the *Sun* yesterday, mauling Gordon Brown about the high pound. Why should we encourage that? You can bore the public catatonic and still convey an impression of competence.

But the thought-controllers' belief that restricting what backbenchers say amplifies the core message is mistaken. Predictability is already beginning to dull the impact. We start listening out for the clichés rather than hearing the words. The repetitious phraseology suggests an under-tow of cynicism. The audience on our chat-show was irritated by the MP's use of formulaic language as a kind of barrier, preventing the penetration of any shard of criticism or doubt. New Labour would be unwise to allow the Tories to become the Party of Plain Speaking. William Hague will make hay with the Government's increasingly stilted language and its distance from the way that real people express themselves.

It is true that the Conservatives suffered in the election because they could not articulate a single message. That was because they were deeply, theologically, divided on Europe. New Labour is not in this position. Mr Blair's main achievement is that he has complete authority in the parliamentary party. The internal opposition is ageing and quiescent. When Mr Sedgmore lashes out at Mr Brown, our response is a resounding, “So what?”

A self-confident governing party should revel in its diversity while celebrating common purpose and values. Admitting the spread of interests, motivations and prejudices among MPs signifies a strength, not a split. Why do the young MPs tell us so little about why they are in politics, about what moves or shocks them? And why do they accept so readily – indeed pre-emptively – the restrictions placed upon them from above? They can't all get promoted by being goody-goodies. New Labour is not a police state. MPs should defend their freedom of speech from the grand inquisitors. They may find that we warm to them as a result.

New minds in Parliament are the seedbed of fresh solutions for age-old problems. But only if the owners of these minds are prepared to use them and to take the occasional risks in the process. As things stand, the only outspoken Labour members are on the margins, like the expansive Rob Marshall-Andrews, who has set up a lunch club with the express purpose of “having a good time and annoying the Government”. Very jolly for him, I'm sure, but neither Mr Marshall-Andrews nor Mr Sedgmore lays out a clear new direction they wish the Labour Party to take. They are, to put it politely, entertaining but irrelevant. The backbenches should be more intellectually productive than this.

All governing parties need people around them to think ahead, to be braver and more radical than the present incumbents. That is not “off message” – it is the life-blood of politics. John Redwood was ten years ahead of his party on privatisation. Frank Field campaigned for reform of the welfare state when it was truly unthinkable that a Labour government would ever deliver it. Mr Blair needs to encourage young men and women capable of looking ahead of their time, of laying out brave ideas which can be tested in the heat of debate. Instead, he has a chorus of regulated approval. If you listen to it for too long, you start to hear the bleating of obedient if slightly miserable sheep.

China will not follow Russia down the stony path of political reform



RUPERT
CORNWELL
ON PREMIER
ZHU RONGJI

YESTERDAY morning in Greenwich, a few moments before 9.30 am, a cruiseboat, rather oddly named the Silver Baracuda, eased up to the pier and an elderly man disembarked, surrounded by a great throng of retainers. Briskly, he makes his way to a black limousine which will ferry him to the Observatory, half hidden in the mists above. Just a handful of us, happy for such rare distraction on the way to work, are at the riverside to see him. A strange buzz is in the air nonetheless. Zhu Rongji, China's new Prime Minister, is making his first visit to the West and expectations are huge. Many indeed have already anointed him as the next great reformer of his country: the man who will seal its transformation into an economic superpower and (why not?) a democracy as well.

Now misty mornings in Greenwich, when palaces float on air and the sky and the river become one, have a way of playing tricks with the memory. As I watched Zhu yesterday, mine went back to 1984, when an earlier reforming Communist upon whom great hopes were pinned, arrived in London to give the world a first glimpse of what he was about. That of course was soon-to-be General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, “a man we can do business with”, as Mrs Thatcher famously commented. But even she had no inkling what business would bring – a negotiated end to the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union in the space of just seven years.

Understandably, Zhu (when we start calling him “Mr Zhu”, we really have taken him to our hearts) loathes being referred to as “China's Gorbachev”. He has no intention of being instrument of the disintegration of his country and its ruling caste. Even so, the su-



Smiling matters: Premier Zhu Rongji in London yesterday

David Rose

perical parallels are irresistible: the early visits to London, the aura of reform, the uninspiring gerontocracies back home, the tingling hint that mysterious societies might be about to open themselves to the world.

So let's start by getting a few things in perspective. Zhu will be 70 this year, the same age as his predecessor Li Peng, he of Tiananmen Square infamy. This does not disqualify him as a reformer – indeed by the standards of Chinese leaders, 70 is

or can blow us off the face of the planet (though maybe it can) – but because the business of China is business.

On the basis of purchasing power (i.e. what people actually produce and consume rather than what exchange rates say they do) it is now the second largest economy on earth. The important news from Peking of late has not been the testing of a new weapon, threats to Taiwan or an egregious abuse of human rights; but the assurance

fering real concessions in its campaign to join the World Trade Organisation. With us, Hong Kong no longer bedevils relations; if ever there was a moment to “play the China card”, as the Americans used to say in another context, this is it.

Yes, Europe is accused of soft-peddling human rights. Remember though, it wasn't constant nagging from the West about the Gulag that persuaded Mr Gorbachev to change the Soviet Union's ways – but his

Zhu loathes being referred to as China's Gorbachev.

He has no intention of being the instrument of the disintegration of his country and its ruling caste.

only advanced middle age. But there has been no generational change of the kind represented by Mr Gorbachev, the vigorous, supremely poised leader, then aged just 53, heir apparent to a string of wheezing old men, whose mere ability to walk unaided made him an object of wonder.

Second, though the truth was concealed behind a forest of nuclear rockets, the Soviet Union of 1984 was economically rotten to the core. But Zhu is someone we have to do business with, not because China is a menace to regional security

that its currency will not be devalued. Assuming this promise is kept, it should make the difference between success and failure in containing Asia's financial crisis.

And unlike the Soviet Union that Gorbachev was representing fourteen years ago, China is already rejoining the world. Yes, human rights still make the loudest headlines. More quietly, however, China has much improved its relations with the US and Russia, not to mention its neighbours in the region. Though many of its trade practices offend, it is of

realisation, after a quarter of century spent administering that mendacious system, that the coercions and rigidities of the system were why his country was slipping ever further behind the West. What he did not realise was that matters were beyond cure. The lie could no longer be sustained; but the lie turned out to be the only thing that sustained the system.

The last Soviet leader made the mistake – though in truth he had little choice – of putting political reform ahead of economic reform (remember *glasnost*?). By contrast, China's

economic achievement is already fact. The modernisation of its economy, and perforce the modernisation of its political system will continue. But Zhu and his colleagues will do their utmost to ensure the first proceeds much more quickly than the second. It's not a trick you can pull off indefinitely, but China is likely to remain an authoritarian state for many years, albeit in the name of a Communist ideology long emptied of all meaning.

And one final reason to think that Zhu will not turn out to be China's Gorbachev. Caution is second nature to China's leaders, and they remember what happened back in May 1989 when Gorbachev visited China at the zenith of his international prestige and popularity. The students adopted him as symbol of the democracy they yearned for; for a moment – until the tanks rolled in at Tiananmen – it looked as though one of the most inspirational mistimed state visits ever would bring about, not the end to 30 years of sulking hostility between Russia and China it was designed to achieve, but revolution. Zhu himself was Mayor of Shanghai when Mr Gorbachev paid a chaotic visit to his city. I was there too, and was electrified. Zhu must have been scared out of his wits. No, Zhu will not be another Gorbachev. Another Russian model comes to mind.

As the motorcade drove off into the mist up towards the Observatory, my mind wandered again – this time backwards by 300 years, but only a mile up-river, to Deptford. The town was then playing host to another ruler from the East, a giant of a man six-feet seven-inches tall, who also wanted to find out about the West. He stayed four months, learning about shipbuilding – then as vital to his ambitions as financial services are to those of modern China (which Zhu discussed at the Bank of England yesterday). The visitor of 1698 gave his name as Peter Mikhailov, but it was an open secret he was really Peter the Great. When the Tsar returned home to Russia, he was as ruthless and autocratic as ever. But Peter modernised his country as none since, not even Gorbachev. And that, I would wager, will be the case with Zhu.

The Duchess of York, the Squatters of Dulwich and Kenneth Branagh

JOHN
WALSH



EXCITING times for the Duchess of York. If you've wondered why she's been more ubiquitous than usual in the media world – hanging out with the cast of *Friends*, flirting with Chris Evans – it's because she is soon to be launched as the hostess of a television chat show. Sky TV have signed her up and, having already pre-sold the show to America, Australia and New Zealand, have made a gratify-

ing amount of cash out of the newly-slender ex-Royal before she utters a single word of the Funny Opening Monologue.

At Sky's Isleworth HQ, they've been auditioning Madges for the show. A “Madge” is the generic name (deriving from Dame Edna's mournful companion and ex-bridesmaid) for those people on American talk shows whose sad function is to sit with the host and make complimentary or wholly phatic remarks, like “So how've you bin?” and “Is that so?” and “That's funny”. The Madges being road-tested are drawn from TV and the press, from warm-up comedians to lady columnists. All report themselves impressed with the Duchess's determination a) to succeed and b) to be loved by one and all. Her condescension knows no bounds. “I'll memorise the names of everyone in the crew, and talk to them about their children,” she has promised, reckless of the fact that the Sky entourage runs into a hundred-plus souls.

One wishes her well in this exciting new career. And one also wishes her some guests less demanding than Norman Mailer, the famously pugacious American novelist whom the Duchess recently met at a New York dinner party. A remarkable conversation ensued: The Duchess: “I'm afraid I haven't read any of your books, but I am a writer myself.” Mailer: “That so?” The Duchess: “*Budgie the Helicopter*. They made a film of it, you know.” Mailer: “I filmed one of my

own books once. Called *Tough Guys Don't Dance*.”

The Duchess: “Oh really? What was it about?”

Mailer: “It's about c**t. Or is it p**sy? Because there's a big difference between c**t and p**sy...” [Upon which a strangled silence fell upon the table. You could hear the raindrops on the window pane like glaciers crashing down the Matterhorn. Eventually the silence was broken by –]

The Duchess: “You know, the most interesting thing about this conversation is going to be the people listening to it.”

Not bad eh? Mr Mailer later confessed to liking the former Royal Highness. He even expressed a desire to, ah, embrace her affectionately. Good heavens. There's no chance, is there, of her metamorphosing into the Duchess of New York?

Panic in London SE21. Where once all was amity, quietude and honest white-collar toil on the cusp of Dulwich and Herne Hill, all hell had broken out. It's like *The War of the Worlds*, with its fleeing suburbanites and spidery aliens. Only this time, it's not Martians, it's the Crusties.

The first sighting was last week, when a scooter was observed parked outside the boarded-up windows of No 94, a council house whose last inhabitants fled long ago. Next came a rustling Vauxhall estate, whose driver investigated a means of entry. Then a camper van disgorged a few more people and, after a time, a light

came on in the supposedly abandoned hallway. Lastly, and climactically, a huge Leyland van, brazenly unencumbered by a tax disc, parked in front of the convoy, leaving just enough room for a decommissioned ice-cream van behind. The neighbours stole out to look and noticed that the house next door to No 94 is also empty and boarded up...

Awagh! Up and down the road, the word flew: “Squatters! In both houses!” Not just indigent squatters, either (Dame Rumour whispered) but the intelligent, clue-d up kind, with mobile phones and dogs and camper vans and names like Swampy and Animal.

Everyone hit the phones. The lady next door rang the council and was told: “It's none of your business, because you're not a council tenant,” ignoring her protests about council taxes and the imminent invasion of her property by shiftless hipsters with dreadlocks and lurcher dogs on bits of string. Another neighbour had a lively discussion with her landlord about the efficacy of boarding up a property. Should you use chipboard? Metal? Bricks? (It could have been the Three Little Pigs discussing the Big Bad Wolf). But only when the first squatters appeared on the roof of No 94 last Saturday afternoon – dramatically framed against the horizon as they prepared to abscond down the back wall of No 96 with jennies in their hands – did the middle classes of Dulwich get really freaked. They rang the police, who rushed round, but soon left

again, thwarted by the laws of possession. The locals resorted instead to glaring at their unwanted new friends. “Oh dear,” said one Crusty to another in a stage whisper. “Looks like we're gonna have some trouble with the neighbours.” A second New Ager looked up. “I wouldn't worry about it,” he observed. “They'll all be back indoors in a minute, watchin' the Boat Race.”

It was worse then we'd feared. The invaders weren't incipient burglars and murderers, they were – far worse – satirists. Weighed down by bourgeois guilt, we slunk inside to our television sets and hoped they'd just jolly well go away.

an amazingly crass piece of work in which Branagh, as a playboy lawyer, affects a Deep South accent as thick as Louisiana molasses and finds himself pursued by a shoeless hobo who's been sprung from prison. A few days after the screening, the nice lady from Polygram rang to suggest interview dates. “And by the way,” she said, casually, “What did you think of it?” I said I thought it was old-fashioned, under-plotted, implausible and had far too many shots of out-of-focus car headlights, but that none of this mattered since one really wanted to see what Mr Branagh was like to meet, and to ask him about his love affair with Hollywood, and how he got along with the great Altman.

Too late. I'd already talked myself out of a job. “I'll put in a request to Kenneth,” said the Polygram babe, “but I'm afraid it's not very likely. He's said he only wants to be interviewed by people who liked the movie”. Well, well. Once, you interviewed an actor or writer or director because you were interested in them. Your job was not that of critic, nor was theirs to gauge the level of your enthusiasm about them. You met as conversationalists – one interrogative, one declarative – rather than as master and lickspittle. Now, presumably, if you want to get near Ken's royal presence, you have to pretend to admire his every move, and be prepared to lie like an eye-witness to his publicity machine.

It's not very grown-up, is it?

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The high price of change

On the waterfront re-use and renovation of the Albert Dock in Liverpool was part of Heseltine's grand scheme. Photograph: Tom Finnie



Michael Heseltine's corporations, set up after urban riots to revive inner cities, have shut down. David Walker asks whether the experiment was worth it

YOU CAN see the evidence on the ground. The spectacular renovation and re-use of the warehouses around the Albert Dock on the Mersey waterfront in Liverpool, the "Tate of the North" and Granada Television's studios. Those "Spender" backdrops on the Tyne, all glitzy bars and restaurant boats. The planting of those wasteland acres between Middlesbrough town and the Tees. New tarmac pathways through the jungle of metal-bashing dereliction around Oldbury in the Black Country.

Even we can see the evidence. From our tower on London's Canary Wharf, 50 storeys high, we look down on a Legoland of dockside offices and (hugely expensive) toy trains and tunnels where once were forbidding dock walls, rusting cranes and weed-infested water of the Thames.

All this is the result of Michael Heseltine's great experiment in urban renewal - the creation of urban development corporations to revive inner city areas - which, after 17 years, ended yesterday. The bits and pieces of land and buildings still left in the urban development corporations' portfolios were formally passed to local councils and successor bodies, such as English Partnerships.

As a result of the demise of the UDCs, the quango count is down. What else does the scorecard show? "Renaissance", said Michael Heseltine. "Billions frittered away in failed property developments", said Alan Milburn, the Labour MP, who as a member of the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee harried and hassled when the Tories were in power.

"It took a riot" was the title of the famous memorandum Michael Heseltine wrote to Margaret Thatcher in the wake of the Toxteth and Brixton disturbances of 1981. One of the shows brought out of the Whitehall locker to deal with deprivation on Merseyside - which Heseltine if not Thatcher certainly believed caused the riots - was a specialist quango with money to buy land and the right to award itself planning permission, the urban development corporation. (The London Docklands Development Corporation had a different genesis, in the failure of London boroughs to agree what to do with their hundreds of hectares of redundant docks.)

There have been no urban disturbances like Toxteth since, it's true, but that is due more to the modernisation of the Merseyside police than the tarring up of the Liver Building. Urban development corporations were about property not people. They were founded on the impatience of the Thatcher government (which Tony Blair probably shares) with elected councils. Their job was to speed up the business of acquiring land, making it fit for development, then selling it on.

Who eventually got jobs in the offices and warehouses was somebody else's worry - Canary Wharf, for instance, has not been a great source of employment for the residents of the deprived London boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Newham.

The dozen corporations claim a positive job count - at

least 150,000 jobs, plus 270 homes, 2,400 hectares of derelict land reclaimed, 5 miles of road built and 5.4 million square metres of industrial and commercial floor space created.

Sir John Bourn, the Controller and Auditor General, concluded the corporations had made "valuable contribution towards regenerating their areas. That is a fair assessment. But all that cost at least £3 billion, probably more when separate subventions for road and rail projects are added in a lost revenue from the parallel Enterprise Zone initiative subtracted. Within, say, the Black Country Development Corporation's area spent by other public bodies including the local council did not cease. It says something scandalous about how we spend public money in Britain that nobody, not even in the dark reaches of Whitehall, knows quite how much was spent, to what effect.

Probably the biggest effect of their creation was to show (mostly Labour) councils in a much more sensible attitude towards development and partnership with the private sector.

The UDCs were modelled on the New Town corporations which built Stevenage, Crawley, Basildon and Croy. But they built on agricultural land and pocketed, on the taxpayers' bill,

Nobody, not even in Whitehall, knows quite how much was spent or to what effect

half, huge gains. There is a case for saying the UDCs have faded too early, leaving private sector developers to get the benefit. The corporations viewed in one light, represent a huge subsidy to private sector developers many of whom would have gone ahead with investments anyway.

We do know the cost per created by the UDCs has as high as £56,000 and that final bill for the 1.1-mile Link road, from the Isle of Dogs to the Isle of Dogs, exceeded £450 million.

Some UDCs worked, some did not. The quangos created in Bristol and Plymouth have been marginal in those cities. The Leeds corporation based on the south central of the city and the Kirkstall ley spent £55.7 million and attracted £350 million private-sector investment, was the investment since transferred from elsewhere.

It would be a brave person who said the development central Manchester, Birmingham or Sheffield is now complete. There are, however, fewer holes in the ground. There are scores of inner-quangos still at work.

The Single Regeneration Budget has this week allocated a further £121 million to the projects. No surprise, then see several of the UDCs' activities transferring to development or job creation projects paid for from the National Lottery.

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Lottery transfers

Alistair Balls of Tyne & Wear Urban Development Corporation to Lottery-funded International Centre for Life in Newcastle	
Steve Thornicroft of Trafford Park UDC to the Lowry Centre, a gallery at Salford Park for LS Lowry's paintings	
Jim Beeston of Birmingham Heartlands UDC to head Millennium Point, a science exhibition	

Private investment

UDCs	£m
London Docklands	6,277
Merseyside	461
Black Country	833
Teesside	928.9
Trafford Park	1,003
Tyne & Wear	1,260
Birmingham Heartlands	302.2
Plymouth	192

هكذا من الأحرار

DILEMMAS

The truth hurts, but what if it is fatal?

Nina's 53-year-old mother has cancer. Her doctor told Nina she only has between six and 18 months to live. She doesn't want her mother to know as she might give up the fight. Though her mother has a weak character and tends to depression, Nina hates to feel she's deceiving her. What should she do?



VIRGINIA IRONSIDE

IT'S awfully difficult not to let strong personal feelings cloud any response to such a difficult and serious question. I would so long, myself, to know if I were going to die that I find it hard even to imagine anyone not wanting to know. The knowledge would give me a chance to tidy up my affairs, say goodbye to people, put right old wrongs, and, perhaps, have the most glorious last few months of life by living it to the full. Indeed for me it would be a real treat to be told, and far better than just popping off surprisingly with a heart attack in my sleep, the way most people would prefer to die.

But there are those who shudder at the idea of being told the awful truth and one has to consider their views. And yet has Nina's mother's doctor really thought this through? He sounds a bit of a berk and anyway has no right to tell a patient's relative anything without her permission. Not only that, but there is absolutely no evidence that those who "battle" with cancer live any longer than those who weep and give in. Cancer is bigger than all of us, and no amount of visualisation, positive messages or Pollyanna-ish brainwashing makes any difference at all to the outcome. Battlers live just as long or as short as waiting hand-wringers. The doctor has also, by telling Nina rather than her mother, put her in an impossible situation. He has let her into a ghastly secret, perhaps wanting, subconsciously, to unload the responsibility of telling the woman herself. Naturally, like an adulterous husband who wants

to dump his guilt on a wife by confessing all, Nina also wants to rid herself of this information by telling her mother. The secret is too great for her to bear on her own.

I would have thought that the doctor could easily have told Nina's mother in a roundabout way what might happen - "To be honest your prognosis is not very good, but even though doctors have very good ideas, we can never be absolutely certain what the final outcome will be", for instance. This would beg the question from her: "Well, how long do you think I have?" If she remained silent, he would know that she didn't want to know. Indeed, it seems odd, if she has cancer, that she hasn't already asked how long she's got. Isn't it the first thing that flashes into one's mind?

Nina's been thrown a ball of fire by her mother's doctor and it's burning her hands. I think she should chuck it back into his court with the threat that if he doesn't at least broach the subject with her mother, even in a roundabout way, within a few months she will have to tell her mother herself. But she should add that she feels the news would come better from him, as indeed it would, including a lot of flannel about the doctor/patient relationship and how she's sure he's "so good at telling news like this."

But if he refuses to tell, I think, on balance, that she should, particularly if she and her mother have a relationship that she wants to cherish.

WHAT READERS SAY

Doctors should always take their cue regarding how much to tell the patient from the patient. The doctor has a responsibility to be honest with his patient and to give her as much information as possible, while at the same time making sure that she is not given more than she can cope with at any one time.

Doctors have a compelling duty of confidentiality to their patients and this doctor has clearly flouted this duty in telling Nina her mother's prognosis in advance of telling the patient. - Dr Michael Wilks, Chairman of the Medical Ethics Committee, British Medical Association

My stepfather died two weeks ago, from bladder cancer. The family doctor told my mother that he had only a few weeks to live. It was my mother's wish not to tell my stepfather because she was able to

predict his reaction. Unfortunately, the doctor decided to tell him that his condition was terminal. He became extremely depressed and lost the will to live. He died a week later. The day after the doctor told my stepfather, my mother asked him if he wished he didn't know and he said yes.

You say your mother is not a very strong character and has a tendency to depression; then you must not tell her. At the moment, your mother must be feeling relatively fit and healthy, it's important that she feels like this for as long as possible. - Sheran Saint

I strongly feel that Nina's mother should know the truth, which will deeply affect the way she lives her remaining time. I am amazed actually that a doctor would conceal the truth from a woman of only fifty three. - Julia Walsh

My father, a fit and intelligent man of 63, was diagnosed with cancer of the lung lining. We were told he could have only three months to live. Our GP very strongly advised that this should not be discussed with him. My mother was adamant that he should not be told. For the next seven months, as that was how long he lived, I saw him become more and more isolated as plans were secretly being made for his death. I desperately wanted to talk to him about any last wishes he may have had. I strongly feel that he was denied the right to be involved and take some control over what was happening. I would say talk again with your doctor and see if this information could be made open, and grieved for, in a shared way. Your feeling that you are deceiving her is a reality and will only intensify. - Anon, Elham SE9

NEXT WEEK'S DILEMMA

Dear Virginia, After a great deal of distress and anxiety I have, at 45, managed to master a word processor and I'm now quite adept at it. But I work from home writing reports for a company and I've just had a letter saying that in future they will only accept stuff on e-

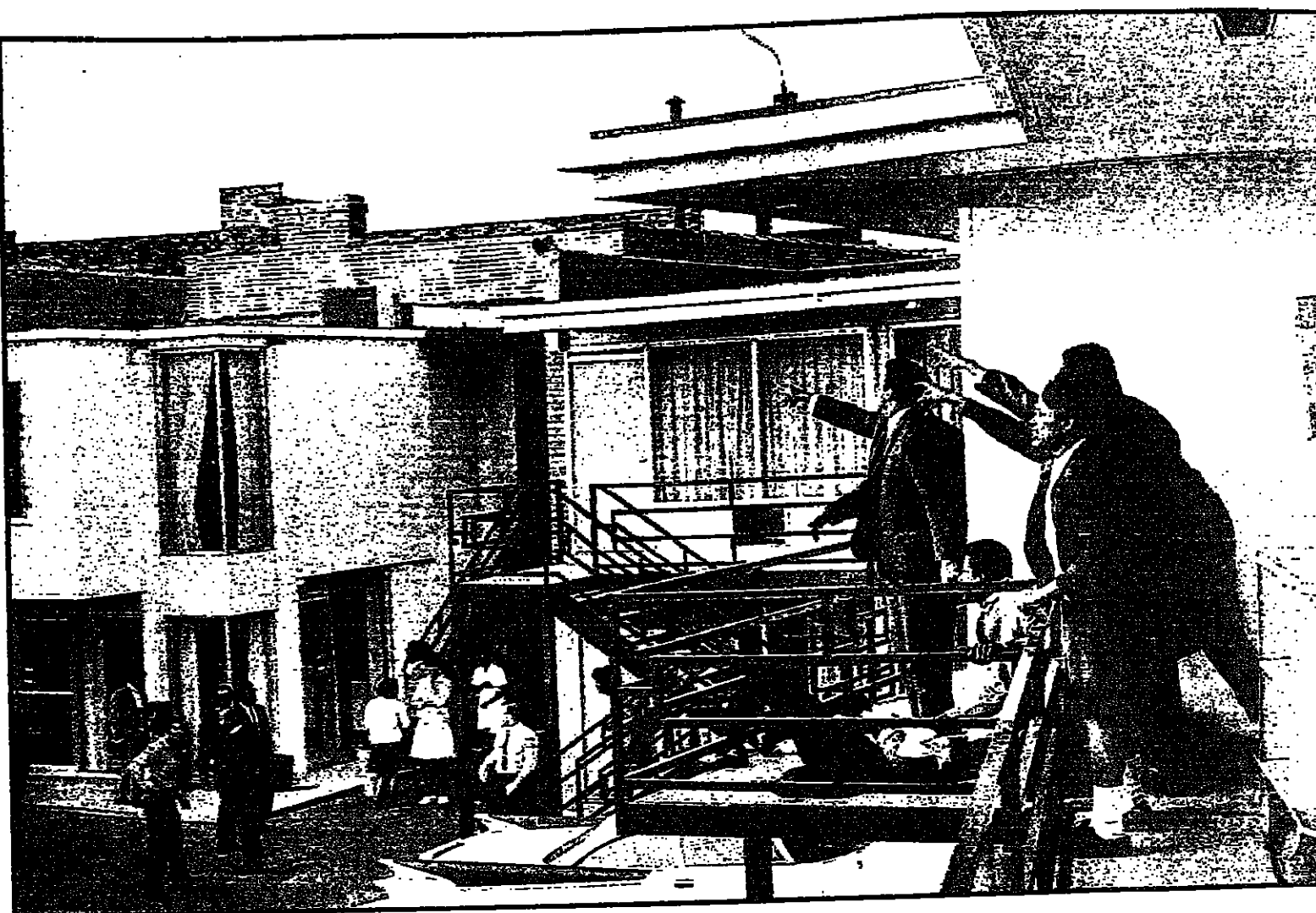
mail or modem. I can't sleep for anxiety and sometimes cry at the prospect of trying to get the hang of it.

I don't know where to begin. I get different advice from everyone, using words I don't understand. My son's thrilled at the idea and says I'll be able to

get on the net and communicate with people all round the world. But I don't want to. I know other people have phobias about new technology. Can any of your readers give me advice on how to overcome the terror I feel?

- Julie

Letters are welcome, and everyone who has a suggestion quoted will be sent a bouquet from *The Independent*. Send comments and suggestions to Virginia Ironside at the Features Department, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL (fax 0171-293 2182), by Tuesday morning. If you have a dilemma of your own, please let me know.



Aftermath: Witnesses react after the shooting of Martin Luther King at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis in 1968

Photograph: Joseph Louw/Colorific

A dream that will not fade

Jacqueline Smith is black, proud and angry: she wants the Lorraine Motel to be her home again, not a shrine to Martin Luther King. Nick Hazlewood visited her in Memphis.

ON A sidewalk in downtown Memphis, Jacqueline Smith - a black woman with a deep respect and love of the late Dr Martin Luther King junior - is urging a coachload of British tourists to stay away from the museum which commemorates his life and work.

As she speaks to them, in sight of the infamous motel balcony where, on 4 April 1968, Dr King was shot dead, she gestures to the sofa, momentarily empty, which is her home. Once, Miss Smith had another home - a simple room in the Lorraine Motel, where 30 years ago this week, Dr King lost his life. Then the idea was born which led to the conversion of the motel into the National Civil Rights Museum - and Miss Smith, like the other tenants, was evicted from her home.

It was in January 1988 that the motel was closed down so that work could begin on converting it into the \$9 million museum. Two months later Jacqueline Smith was forcibly removed from her room by the Sheriff's office and dumped on the sidewalk with her furniture. That was more than 3,700 days ago and she has lived here ever since.

Now she tells the eager sightseers of her life. As she poses for photos they agree to abandon their visit and turn their backs on the motel.

"They asked me 'what are you going to do now?' And so I said I'm going to stay right here where you put me," recalls the 46-year-old who is heavily wrapped in a blue lumberjack jacket against the chill of a cold Memphis spring.

"I had lived in this motel for 11 years - losing my home was bad enough, but turning it into a tourist attraction was a disgrace to the memory of Dr King." A calm indignation rises

in her voice. "This place has no association with civil rights, other than it is where he was killed". Instead she believes that the money used to turn the dilapidated old motel into the impressive building it now appears should have been used to house some of Memphis's many homeless or build a health clinic for the poor.

Jacqueline has sat outside the motel through ice storms, snow and rain, bedding down in a sleeping bag and sheltering from the harsher extremes of the weather under a tarpaulin. But it hasn't been only

sidewalk. It was one of those trucks with the big wheels, it ran right up and smacked Jacqueline. The truck missed Jacqueline, but ran over the arm of a companion. He wasn't seriously hurt but Jacqueline is convinced that it was a real attempt to get rid of the nuisance that she had become.

And she has become a nuisance. Alongside the sofa, large banners demand that visitors boycott the National Civil "Wrong" Museum. A small table is covered in books, a bible, a box for donations and one of the many files she has

come by here to see if I'm okay, see if I need anything. I don't work, I don't have a job. I just get by on the kindness of the people who support what I do."

The Lorraine is in a neighbourhood that not even the bravest of souls would want to spend a night: tucked away on a street of cracked paving stones and sunken tarmac, you reach it by crossing a couple of glass strewn parking lots. Miss Smith, however, is a survivor: "I mean I'm still here. I sleep here at night and nobody has bothered me. All around there's

stood for photographs with Jacqueline.

However, three years later, the museum offered Carter an award for his civil rights work and he took it. He went to see Miss Smith again, but she angrily refused to shake hands with him. Miss Smith's protest has backed the civil rights museum into a difficult corner, as Leila Boyd, the museum's membership coordinator, acknowledges. "Certainly she has an effect, but Jacqueline is exercising her civil rights. Given the nature of the museum we do respect what she is doing."

The authorities have invited Miss Smith to take a look around the facility, but she has yet to take up the offer. It also seeks to address some of her complaints. "Philosophically we must agree that the needs of the poor and the disenfranchised should be at the forefront of our consciences," says Miss Boyd. "However, there are about 1,000 abandoned buildings in Memphis and any one of them could be used for this purpose. This is a museum because of what it is and where it is. This museum serves a unique purpose that could not be placed in just any building."

As for Jacqueline Smith, her fight goes on. "I'm like any other human being. I want shelter and comfort, but I've chosen to do this to get people to focus on Martin Luther King's true meaning and to get them to remember Dr King through their actions and their deeds. I don't see no time in the future that I would give up this protest unless something changes at the Lorraine Motel and by that I mean that it's converted into a facility to help the poor and take care of the people King cared for."

"Until that day I'm going to continue to be here."

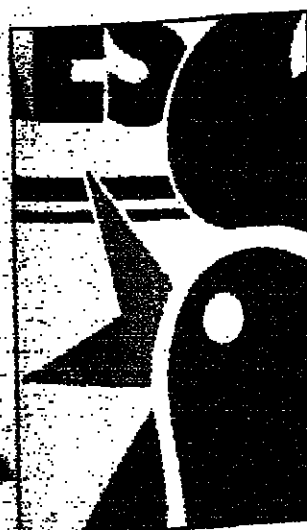


Fighting on: Jacqueline Smith has vowed to continue her protest inspired by the memory of Martin Luther King

Photographs: Nick Hazlewood/MSI



Just how healthy is our unswerving trust in brand names?



Chewing: Kellogg's claim to save our trust

PARDON the pun, but Kellogg's is in hot water over its current advertising campaign, suggesting fat children who eat its cereals for breakfast can lose weight and avoid school bullies. The cornflake company stands accused of exploitation of misery for commercial gain: is there no limit to the cynical manipulations of today's corporate masters of the universe?

Kellogg's defence of its promotion was for its senior marketing manager to boast that "We are Britain's most trusted company. That's why we had the confidence to do this." But what else is to be expected? A collapse of public faith

Kellogg's have shown there's a fine line between advertising and exploitation, says Rupert Cornwell in old-fashioned "institutions" is a worldwide phenomenon. Here, a study last year by the Henley Centre found that trust in Parliament had dropped by four-fifths between 1983 and 1996, to just 10 per cent. Confidence in the civil service tumbled from 40 per cent to 14 per cent, in the legal system and the Church to just 28 per cent. Only the armed forces have resisted the trend - but they're a pretty extreme solution to stop your child getting picked upon at school.

In a sense of course, this massacre of sacred cows is utterly healthy, a breaking loose

of the numbing, hypocritical tyranny of its past. But we humans must believe in something. And what doesn't let you down, what is within our control? Not God, not the courts, not the men from the ministry or the local authority, not your MP - but those stores you visit every week, and the brands they stock, among which you, sovereign in this small area of life at least, can choose. And we ask little of them. Barring beetles in the Rice Krispies or mould on the chocolate bar, they have fulfilled their part of

the bargain. Thus the new pillars of our insecure society: Kellogg's with a trust rating of 84 per cent, followed closely by Cadbury, Heinz, Nescate and Rowntree. The places you buy them are equally esteemed: Boots and Marks & Spencer at 83 per cent, Sainsbury's at 77 per cent, the Co-op at 57 per cent. The stores of course have long since offered their own brands. Some have moved much further: Sainsbury's into garden equipment, DIY and banking, M&S into just about everything. Now, Kellogg's has merely indulged in a little lateral think-

ing. Ironically, that 24-carat image, the idyl of nature, breakfast, children and the family that decaled into our subconscious, has made conventional brand-stretching tough for the company. So Kellogg's has sought to broaden the impact of its cereals themselves, not the range of products sold under its name. Is it wrong for a commercial company to use social issues like obesity and bullying to further its cause? Only, surely, if the claims it makes are false. For all the cautions of well-mean-

ing sociologists that the ads will only make things worse for overweight children by attracting attention to them and - astoundingly - that no link exists between being fat and being bullied, it's hard to accuse Kellogg's of going too far. Plainly, fat children can get bullied. Plainly, you're less likely to be bullied if you have a bowl of cornflakes, rather than a mountain of potato chips and doughnuts, for breakfast. Of course, a cereal breakfast like Kellogg's can't solve complex weight problems. The blurb runs, "but in its own

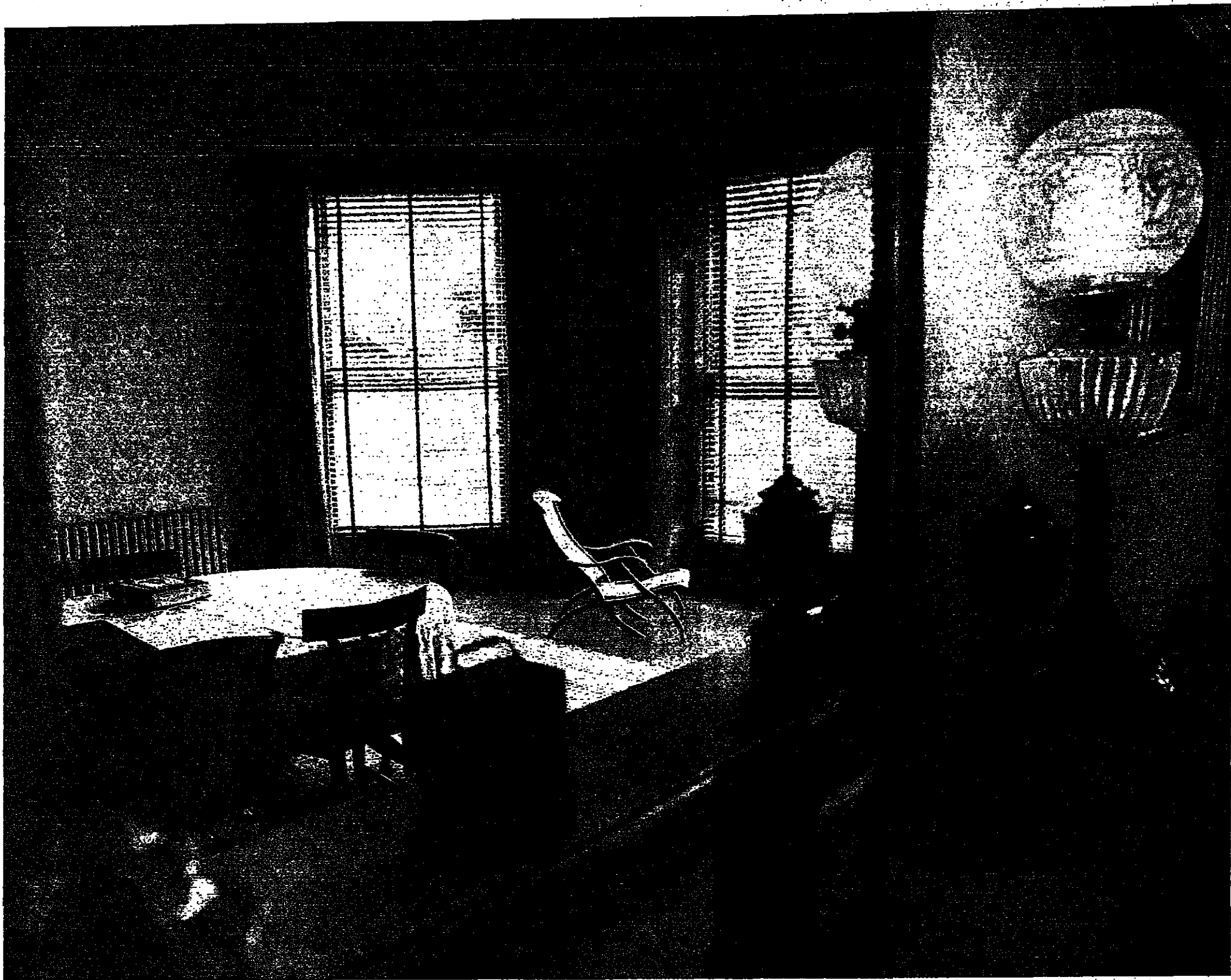
small way, it can really help."

Can maybe, but hardly a breach of the Trade Descriptions Act. And if we don't like it, then we have only ourselves, and the direction in which we have driven our society, to blame.

"This is an end product of the 1980s privatisations, the privatisation of risk," says Paul Edwards, Henley's chief executive. "The institutions and everyone else are pulling back from sensitive areas like this." So consumer brands, with their capital of trust, move in to fill the gap. We may object, but in society's moral vacuum it's inevitable. And who knows, it may lead to a Kellogg's foundation for the study and treatment of bullying.



A portrait of Darwin hangs above the stairs (above). The steamer chair by the bay window (right) reveals his nostalgia for the five years he spent on HMS 'Beagle'. In his ship-shape study (below), he was meticulous in his labelling of artefacts
Photographs: Brian Harris



Monument to science, if not to style, Nambood

Charles Darwin's newly restored home brings to life a genius who had terrible taste. Nonie Niesewand reports

CHARLES DARWIN has a clone. He is the whisky head of museums collection and interior decoration at English Heritage. Julian Bryant, 40 – the same age as Darwin when he wrote *On the Origin of Species* – has spent two years restoring Darwin's workplace and family house, Down House, on the fringes of south-east London. It opens to the public next week.

In a frock coat with sideburns pasted to his jowls, he poses at Darwin's microscope for TV programme *Blue Peter*. "At last, my broad forehead comes into its own," he says. "But I haven't had whiskers like these since the Seventies."

"Jolly good likeness," says Stephen Keynes, Darwin's great-great grandson, who is setting up an international educational charity for natural his-

tory on the estate. His advice to English Heritage was to keep the house shabby.

The timing of opening the house, on Good Friday, is brilliant. Darwin is back in fashion, with BBC2 running a week of programmes about him. "Science is sexy again," says Down House manager, Tracy Thurstfield. "It's the millennial lever."

At the house, Darwin produced 17 books, numerous scientific papers, and 10 children, seven of whom survived until adulthood. He and his wife, Emma, spent 40 years there, adding wings to the old parsonage, until it had 16 bedrooms and a giddy roof line.

The house was taken over by the Royal College of Physicians in 1927 and maintained as a mu-

seum to Darwin, but dry rot and woodworm began to get the better of the fabric of the house. The roof needed attention. So, in 1996, English Heritage acquired Down House through a donation from the Wellcome Trust and spent £2.2m of lottery money on its restoration.

This was the first time English Heritage had restored a house without particular architectural significance, or period rooms that would pass the style trial. It used old photos and paintings to rebuild the five period rooms downstairs – the hall, billiard room, dining room and drawing room, and Darwin's study. Through paste and papers, wall-to-wall Axminster carpets and meticulous props, it has brought the family man

and scientist to life. The challenge was to build around a celebrity the sort of house that *Hello!* would photograph if the Darwins were still alive.

Each room illustrates a different aspect of Darwin's personality, while remaining true to the original decor. In the biliously coloured billiard room are portraits of the playful Darwin, whose father cautioned: "You care for nothing but shooting, dogs and rat-catching and you will be a disgrace to yourself and all your family." On a patriarchal picture, taken late in life by Julia Margaret Cameron, he writes: "I like this photograph very much better than any other which has been taken of me."

The austere and dignified dining room shows his Anglican, Tory, establishment background, with late Regency mahogany furniture, family portraits of the Wedgwoods (his wife's family) and the Darwins, and his bust in marble on a plinth. A steamer chair by the bay window reveals his nostalgia for the five years he spent on HMS *Beagle*.

So does his ship-shape study, in which Darwin labelled everything, including his slide rule by the pigeon bones. On his correspondence table lie log books, journals and post from scientific sleuths all over the world.

That dialogue continues after his death. This summer, a scientist from the Smithsonian Institute in the US, who discovered a blood stain in one of Darwin's books, will take a DNA sample to reveal whether Darwin really caught Chagas fever from a South American beetle. The sweatband from Darwin's top hat was rejected as unsuitable for this piece of forensic science. Whatever his ailment, Darwin was a chronic hypochondriac, as the spittoons, inhalers, knitted shawls and daily medical records reveal.

Darwin as a family man is depicted best in the drawing room. Standing on the piano are garden pots full of worms. Darwin's children would play the hansom and piano to them while their father observed the effect of music on worms turning. Unlike most Victorian

households, children were seen, and heard here. His wife Emma's interest in natural history spills over into the decoration, with its cow parsley, wheat sheaves, poppies and butterflies – and that's just the curtains.

Clearly, the Darwins had execrable taste. A profusion of pattern and riot of colour set raspberry and cobalt blue, pea-green and magenta against each other in the same room. Worse, Darwin and his wife did not buy Arts and Crafts wall-papers and fabrics, but the cheaper high-street equivalent, which English Heritage had a hard job matching.

Working with classic English paint, paper, fabric, lino and Axminster carpet manufacturers, Mr Bryant researched the products available at the time. Then he sourced them from suppliers' archives, cross-matching colours and patterns like a true scientist. The task of decorating the rooms again was made harder by the Darwins' indifference to Art and Fashion. As Owen Raverat wrote of her relatives in *Period Piece*: "When

they bought an armchair, they thought first of whether it would be comfortable, and next of whether it would wear well. Then, a long way afterwards, whether they themselves happened to like the look of it. The result, though often dull and sometimes unfortunate, was on the whole pleasing because it was, at any rate, unpretentious."

Mr Bryant was undaunted. He saw his task as drawing a portrait of Darwin in everyday household things. "Their taste was a slight problem for me," he admits, but the only time he lost his nerve was in the drawing room, where he couldn't bring himself to have the cornices painted mauve and gold. So, they are magnolia.

Seven bedrooms upstairs have been turned into exhibition rooms to tell the story of a conventional Victorian who shocked the world. They show that his scientific knowledge got off to a slow start: the dunce at school, fossil collecting at Cambridge, years on the *Beagle* meticulously collecting flora and fauna from forays into

South America. The Natl History museum has lent so stuffed animals, including puffer fish, pangolins, a gi white fulmar spreading wings, and a Galapagos tur No apes. In a clamorous tur tapes of actors playing in-nant bishops and politicians viting *On the Origin of Spe* takes us up to date with netics, and the cloning of D the sheep.

If visiting scientists o-plain that there isn't enough inform the Cambridge up-grad here. Mr Bryant will them he didn't do up the he for them. Rather, it is to popular learning centre for young. Nor did he recon- it for the style police, who- to know why there aren't of papers next to an unplu-chair. He dismisses this as chimpanzee approach to-ervation", from which I ssume he despises artifice and, in particular, unnatur-lection. Darwin would app-



THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD
No. 2473. By Aquila Tuesday's Solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32

ACROSS

- Screwed up, having credit relaxed? (7)
- Foot's means of raising a vessel (7)
- Telegraphed reply, we hear, from Austrelitz originally? (3-6)
- An aim to treat a thing (5)
- Intended for singing in a light voice (5)
- Absorbed fat in need, possibly (9)
- Novel of Capricorn, etc coming out? No, the other one! (6,2,6)
- Three-round courses – finished off in the nineteenth (4,10)
- Brazilian measure to make manager a star (5,4)
- Arm with revolver? (5)
- Shame tar has been spilt (5)
- Annie's home, raising the issue (9)
- Helping poor relations (7)
- Extremely dirty, unpleasant house? (7)
- Keep changing time for soprano? Neat! (6)
- Ruler through in Rome, perhaps (7)
- Not, presumably, works of Landseer (9)
- Dim for players, soccer ended in confusion (11)
- Shock when rule is overturned (3)
- Star's brief appearance amounted to nothing (5)
- Not being able to call up mobile cinemas? (7)
- Sample colours (8)
- Provided with cover for the present (4-7)
- A sin originally inevitable? Find out! (9)
- Cab's ordered by poet – one taking in Toledo (8)
- Parvenu at university receives shock (7)
- Tricks to enrage parents (7)
- Bad-tempered American in corner, modelling (6)
- White-faced like Partlet (5)
- Circle of French lines (3)

What shape is the next century?

The Millennium Products are absent from a new exhibition of British design, says Nonie Niesewand

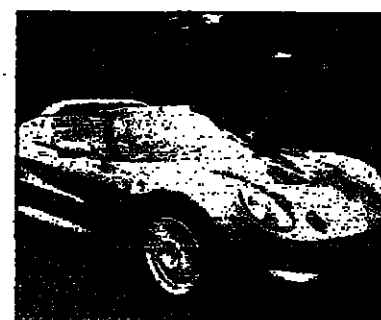
TONIGHT, the Prime Minister opens Powerhouse:uk, an exhibition of British design products inside four, silver, inflatable pods on Horseguards Parade. Yet, the Lotus chosen by the Design Council as a Millennium Product will not be pulling up smoothly outside. Although Tony Blair will be announcing 202 of the Millennium choices at tonight's bash, only four of them have been included in the Powerhouse.

The rest would have been Cinderellas anyway, because you'd need a fork-lift truck to get them to the party. In fact, one of them is a fork-lift truck. The Design Council's Millennium Products list includes aircraft ejection seats and bolt-down public benches, or the six-lane covered railway and emergency bridge joining Hong Kong to its new airport, and the Eurostar train. They represent ingenuity – and heavy industry.

Sexy they are not. But that's a description Powerhouse can claim – the gizmos and gadgets drummed up by architects Doug Branson and Nigel Coates



Heavy metal: Eurostar and the Lotus are on the Design Council's list

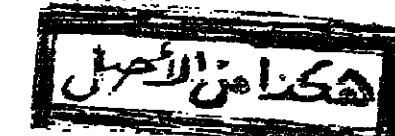


ered about passing the style trial, cool, isn't it? It's on the move, agile, s ing British people playing the part.

This begs a question: were the sign Council's Millennium choices cool enough to make the Powerhouse guest list? True, it does include a Dyson bagless vacuum cleaner; Dison's Jack, a phosphorescent c made of the same material as traffic lards, and the Psion Five electronic organiser – all on the council's list, fourth item is Blatchford's com-erised artificial limb for landmine vic-

The truth is that the Millenn Products so far all seem a bit wor Green, yes, with insecticide sp which reduce drift and water-b paintstrippers. Educational, too. It vative in the way they cut diesel e- sions on trucks. But just what do pairs of cows' galoshes designed to their legs aching and milk produc falling say about British design?

Powerhouse:uk opens on Sunday 4A



David Hicks

DAVID HICKS was perhaps the "David Bley" of interior designers: the only exponent of that profession the man in the street might be able to put a name to. For nearly 40 years Hicks has been a household word – to many a household god – and his style a touchstone of good, mad, but never indifferent, taste.

His many books – the first, *David Hicks on Decoration*, published in 1966 – have been inexhaustible quarries of ideas and inspiration to the following generations of designers. His later work, with its massive overscaling and deceptive simplicity greatly influenced by his hero Sir John Soane – with frequent *chapeaux* to Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor – became the classical trademark by which he will be best remembered, but it was his early work, so violently heathen to the cretonned hearths of post-Festival Britain that brought him instant recognition, a well-observed and edited transatlantic-stroke-French chic that propelled him up ladders so fast his "international fun-folk bobble shoes", as his contemporary Dominic Elwes noted, hardly touched the rungs.

That, and of course, his looks. Son of a distinguished but decidedly elderly Essex stockbroker – that his grandfather lived in the reign of George III enormously endeared David to his future father-in-law, that monarch's great-great-grandson Earl Mountbatten of Burma – and an intelligent and sensitive mother whose culinary skills were to be a boon to David's early bachelor life, he was born in 1929 and christened David Nightingale – perhaps the closest he ever came to natural modesty: he was probably correct in claiming that he alone had invented the profession of interior designer – as opposed to mere decorator.

He was educated at an unloved Charterhouse, fol-

lowed by a hated but then obligatory stint in the Army ("smelly young men my own age") which determined him to be his own master, and he enrolled in the Central School of Art and Design in London. This led to contact with advertising agencies and photographers such as Terence Donovan, for whom he would frequently "and brilliantly" decorate sets.

At the same time he acquired the first of what was to be a series of ravishing country houses, the Temple at Stoke-by-Nayland in Essex, which he had often bicycled past as a child. Here he created his first decors, devised his first garden (the long dark canal before the Temple's facade would feature frequently in his own and clients' landscapes), gave his first parties, invited his first friends – one of whom remembers, "I'd put a slice of lemon in the gin and tonic. David was agast. 'What do you think this is? A restaurant?' " Other friends were mainly of the more sophisticated world, headed by Bunny Roger, Arthur Jeffries, Barry Sainsbury and those veteran, inveterate matchmakers Chips Channon and Peter Coats.

In Hicks's incandescent glamour and vaunting talent, they saw vast potential. Some dazzling union must be achieved: a marriage of patrician wealth and raw ambition. It was, in 1958, joined by the equally brilliant young decorator Tom Parr (who went on to head Colefax and Fowler), Hicks and Parr opened in London on Lowndes Place, off Belgrave Square. No one who was there that first evening will forget the 27 metal African lances hung exactly five-and-a-half inches apart, horizontally, on one wall, or a thousand watts lighting, in relief, a vast baroque torso. The spare spare energy, the space, the scale, were literally breathtaking. The David Hicks style had truly arrived.

So much so, indeed, that he



"I'm very famous and clever and I'm married to a very rich lady": Hicks became a kind of interior dictator

Photograph: Hulton Getty

moved into 22 South Eaton Place, where he and his mother would entertain – David's fantasies, her food. The decor became the cynosure of eyes. Carpets and curtains were banished. Books must be bound all white. Monotones prevailed – as Vere French confessed, "When Hicks and Parr said beige, who was I to lag behind?" The ultra-modern art hung frameless, the white flowers in lit glass tanks. Baths and beds bedroste the middle of rooms. David's pugs could only eat off Chinese blue and white. It was all very surprising.

But David Hicks could always surprise. In 1960, the announcement of his grand marriage to Lady Pamela Mountbatten amazed all but a very few. "Oh I don't call that grand," his

friend Tony Armstrong-Jones remarked. (Five months and a title later revealed why.)

Henceforward Hicks's clients and life style took an acutely upward turn, the former providing the latter – a couple of beautiful 18th-century houses, one in St Leonard's Terrace in Chelsea, the other the near-stately Britwell in Oxfordshire, which his wife ran with exquisite grace and tact. Hicks joined the squirearchy, rode, learnt to shoot (extremely well) and allowed his never-over-repressed ego to blossom ("I'm very famous and clever and I'm married to a very rich lady") as well as bourgeoisie-teasing pronouncements: "Red and yellow dogs are fearfully common" (red was later applied to cattle with equal rigidity). "Daffodils

are hideous"; and I remember a postcard from "the Rainforests. Another of God's mistakes" – an almost Fribankian comment.

Concurrently his fame and influence spread world-wide, his influence and hauteur making him a kind of interior dictator. One besotted client on the Iberian peninsula kept Hicks's room "as he left it" and would allow friends to glimpse the grill through a barely opened door. But clients became friends, always – Hicks's immense knowledge, enthusiasm and humour saw to that. He frequently invited Elaine Sassoon, who, when married to Vidal, had been among the first and intensely private Nico Londonderry Fame was a lifelong confidante. His talent for

friendships echoed his temperament. His standards were high, he hated many things and people, but once in his pantheon he would never ever let them down. Hicks was too worldly to be cruel.

He was let down, himself, however, by a disastrous business liaison which wrecked unaccustomed havoc. Hicks, with his reserve of courage and that irrepressible ego, retrenched and reorganised, building and decorating in many countries, but concentrating now on garden design, at which he was perhaps even more talented and original. The best example of his new-found genius is his own garden at the Grove, the lovely house in a fold of the valley below Britwell, where Pamela and he lived their elegant, harmo-

nious, rock-and-royalty life for the past 20 years.

Here he could indulge in forcing nature into the linear and geometric patterns he so loved to use indoors, and devise elaborate humours – a *trompe l'oeil* church steeple was attached to a hay-cart so that he could instantly terminate a distant view. And it was here, his handsome family around him, that David Hicks left, in tranquillity, the life he had so exuberantly adorned.

Nicholas Haslam

David Nightingale Hicks, interior decorator and garden designer: born Coggeshall, Essex 25 March 1929; director, David Hicks Ltd 1960-98; married 1960 Lady Pamela Mountbatten (one son, two daughters); died Britwell Salome, Oxfordshire 29 March 1998.

• Taste is not something you are born with, nor is it anything to do with your social background. It is worth remembering that practically anyone of significance in the world of the arts, whether in the past or today, was nobody to start with. Nobody has ever heard of Handel's or Gainsborough's father.

• My passion for arranging masses of things together is part of the way I see objects and use them. It not only looks mean, but is visually meaningless, to have one bottle of gin, one of whisky, a couple of tonic water and a soda syphon on a table in the living-room, even though that might be perfectly adequate for the needs of one evening's entertainment.

• It is perhaps I who have made tablescapes – objects arranged as landscapes on a horizontal surface – into an art form. Indeed, I invented the word... What is important is not how valuable or inexpensive your objects are, but the care and feeling with which you arrange them. I once bought six inexpensive tin mugs in Ireland and arranged them on a chimneypiece to create an interesting effect in a room which otherwise lacked objects. They stood there in simple perfection.

• I dislike brightly coloured front doors – they are more stylish painted white, black or other dark colours. I hate wrought iron. I loathe colour used on modern buildings – it should be inside. I do not like conventional standard lamps – I prefer functional floor-standing reading lights. Function is just as important as aesthetics... Function dictates design.

From David Hicks, *Living with Design*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson 1979

E. M. S. Namboodiripad

E. M. S. NAMBOODIRIPAD was the last of India's fire-brand Marxist revolutionaries and theoreticians. As head of the world's first elected Communist government in his southern home state of Kerala in the 1950s, "EMS" pioneered radical land and educational reforms that are today being duplicated by other states.

It is largely due to his commitment and guidance that the Communist Party of India (Marxist), or CPM, of which he was Politburo member and general secretary for 14 years, has become such a dominating political force, playing a vital role in India's new era of coalition politics. CPM governments are in power in Kerala and in the eastern states of Bengal and Tripura.

Apart from being an astute politician who led the workers' struggle for over six decades, EMS was an author, historian, social commentator and theorist who astutely adopted Marxist and Leninist ideals to Indian conditions. He never repudiated the fundamentals of Marxism, convinced the world would embrace it once again.

His regimen was Spartan. He lived in a small house rented for him by the party in Kerala's cap-



'EMS': the 'Red Scourge'

ital, Thiruvananthapuram, and, before retiring from active politics in 1991, daily woke at 4.30am to write articles, dictate pamphlets or a speech. All earnings from his voluminous writings went to the party chest.

He was born in 1909 into an aristocratic upper-caste Brahmin family. A precocious child, at 13 he joined a local society devoted to fighting orthodoxy and the welfare of the untouchables. He organised campaigns for the abolition of bigamy, for inter-caste marriage and remarriage for widows.

As an undergraduate at St Thomas College at Trichur he joined the Congress Party's

struggle for freedom from colonial rule, and a few years later was imprisoned for a year for participating in the Civil Disobedience Movement. He used his imprisonment to educate himself politically and in 1936 was appointed secretary of the Malabar Congress Committee.

In 1939 he joined the Communist Party of India after differences with the Congress over its co-operation with the colonial government for the Second World War. He gave away his valuable inherited properties to the party, whose Central Committee he joined in 1941. After independence in 1947, he went underground for three years, the federal government having banned the Communist Party, which had called for an armed uprising. He carried a reward of 5,000 rupees on his head, an enormous sum at the time.

EMS became the Communist party's Politburo member in 1948 and nine years later, soon after the formation of Kerala state, its chief minister, the world's first Communist ever to be elected to a legislative post. He headed the state for two years before the federal government, terrified of the "Red Scourge", toppled him.

But during his short span in office he introduced wide-ranging social, agrarian, economic and educational reforms that eventually turned Kerala into the model state it is today with an impressive *per capita* income and an enviable literacy rate of 98 per cent – the highest in India. In 1964 EMS was largely responsible for splitting the Communist party into the hard-line Marxist group, the CPM that was ideologically untainted by "right-wing deviancy". Three years later he once again became Kerala's chief minister, heading a coalition government which fell apart in 1969. As a veteran Communist he continued to combat bourgeois democracy through weekly columns, pamphlets and erudite, well-argued booklets. He became CPM general secretary in 1977, a post he held for 14 years.

Kuldip Singh

Elamkulam Manakkal Sankaran Namboodiripad, politician: born Kerala, India 1909; Chief Minister of Kerala 1957-59, 1967-69; General Secretary, Communist Party (Marxist), India 1977-91; married (two sons, two daughters); died Thiruvananthapuram, India 19 March 1998.

Walter Easey

WALTER EASEY campaigned against the excesses of authority for most of his life. Bad government and the police were favourite targets, though he was happy to turn his fire on big business, the judiciary and the monarchy. As a campaigner for democracy in Hong Kong he was the first to predict it would fall under Chinese control. As police policy adviser to the Greater London Council before its abolition and then Camden Council and the Association of London Authorities, Easey focused public attention on the nature and cost of policing. Much of what he campaigned for in the 1970s is now established police policy nationwide.

Born in Bedford, he grew up in Birmingham and moved to Canterbury at the age of 11 to take up a scholarship at Kent College. He went up to Keele University but left for Hong Kong and the police, where he became an inspector in the anti-corruption special branch. He learned fluent Cantonese, partly to help spot corruption but also to ask for the recipes of the local dishes he loved. He left Hong Kong to follow his first wife-to-be, Phyllis Chia, an architect, to Canada, where he

worked as a private detective before returning to the UK in 1972.

While working towards a degree in Chinese history at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, he set up the Hong Kong Research Project, dedicated to exposing corruption and mismanagement. He financed it by working as the barman at SOAS. He also published a series of pamphlets promoting democracy in Hong Kong. He formed a coalition of anti-Cold War, anti-Vietnam campaigners. His home in London was raided more than once by detectives under the pretext of searching for "stolen goods".

He also taught a martial arts class at SOAS – the first at which feminist women were made to feel welcome; there he met Anna Davin, with whom he lived from 1975 to 1984. They had a daughter, Sally, now 21.

In the early 1980s he gave up the research project to work in police monitoring – first for the GLC, then Camden Council and the Association of London Authorities – combining his radical campaigning background with knowledge from his police and detective work. A Maoist, he was passionate in his convictions and his approach was

blunt to the point of being confrontational. He criticised police management for running their finances like a "toffee shop" and launched fierce attacks on racism and sexism in the force.

Yet he was respected by key officers who admired his knowledge and conviction and were prepared to leak their secrets to him: through Easey the world came to know Scotland Yard's innermost thoughts on the gulf between the haves and have-nots under Margaret Thatcher and the impact of government policy on crime. He also drew public attention to the huge cost of policing, revealing in 1992 that each senior officer cost



Easey: police policy

poll-tax payers nearly £400 a day. One of the pleasures of knowing Walter Easey was drinking Guinness with him in the pub near his home at Elephant and Castle in south London and listening to his unrepeatable, and unreportable, tales about the police. Yet there is no doubting his effectiveness: relations between the police and local authorities moved from outright hostility to productive dialogue during his local authority career.

After his early retirement through ill-health in 1992 he worked from home. He was irreverent and sometimes irascible, but his hardline ideology never obscured his humanity; he helped neighbours with right-to-buy application forms despite his implacable opposition to the sale of council houses. To the end he was an active campaigner for Gulf war veterans suffering from illnesses after Desert Storm, even as he himself succumbed to cancer.

Peter Victor

Walter Easey, police policy adviser: born Bedford 11 October 1941; married first Phyllis Chia (marriage dissolved), (one daughter by Anna Davin), second 1987 Ellen Jordan; died London 23 February 1998.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

AGAR: Della Margaret, Fellow Emerita, Newham College, died in Addenbrooke's Hospital on Sunday 29 March, after a short illness, aged 88 years. Widow of John Newton Agar. Funeral service at Cambridge City Crematorium West Chapel on Tuesday 7 April at 3pm. Floral tributes to co-operative Funeral Service, 34 James Street, Cambridge, telephone 01223 357040.

GREEN: Jan (Beatrice Helen) Novell, nee Waiell, in Vancouver on 29 March. Voice teacher, actress and drama coach, mother of James, Lucy and Nick and wife of Jim Green (former UK Representative at ICAO Montreal). She passed peacefully in presence of family after three months' struggle with lung cancer. Private cremation and memorial service already held. St David's Anglican Church, Tawse, BC. Memorial service later in Montreal. No flowers or donations to your chosen charity.

Announcements for Births, Marriages & Deaths may be telephoned to 0171-293 2011 (24-hour answering machine) 0171-293 2012 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall will visit the Falkland Islands on 10-11 April. The Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall will visit the Falkland Islands on 10-11 April. The Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall will visit the Falkland Islands on 10-11 April.

BIRTHDAYS

Admiral Sir Michael Boyce, Commander-in-Chief, Fleet, 53; Sir Jack Brabham, racing driver, 72; Sir Graham Bright, former MP, 66; Mr Linford Christie, athlete, 38; Mr Richard Collinge, cricketer, 53; Mr Marshall Sir Geoffrey Dhenin, 80; Sir Richard Dobbs, former Lord-Lieutenant of County Antrim, 79; Sir Christopher France, former senior civil servant, 64; Mr George MacDonald Fraser, writer and journalist, 73; Mr Paul Gambaccini, disc jockey, 49; Miss Catherine Gaskin, romantic novelist, 69; Mrs Myra Green, director, East European Partnership, VSO, 60; Mr Raymond Gubbay, concert promoter, 52; Sir Alec Guinness, actor, 84; The Right Rev Richard Hawkins, Suffragan Bishop of Crediton, 59; Mr Barry Hills, racehorse trainer, 61; Sir Ian Hunter, impresario, 79; Miss Penelope Keith, actress, 58; Sir Peter Middleton, a deputy chairman, BZW Banking Division, Barclays Bank, 64; Mr Michael Rizzello, sculptor and coin designer, 72; Sir Denis Rooke, former chairman, British Gas, 74; Miss Sue Townsend, writer, 52; Mr Denis Tuohy, broadcaster, 61.

Anniversaries

Births: Charlemagne (Charles I. Carolus Magnus), King of the Franks

and Emperor of the West, 742; Hans Christian Andersen, writer, 1805; William Holman Hunt, Pre-Raphaelite painter, 1827; Emilie Zola, novelist, 1840; Sir Neville Cardus, cricket and music writer, 1889; Serge Lifar, choreographer, 1905; Deasthen Samuel Finley Breese Morse, inventor, 1872; Cecil Scott Forester, novelist, 1906; Georges-Jean Raymond Pompidou, President of France, 1974. On this day: the Royal Society was granted its Charter, 1663; the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race was first broadcast, 1927; Argentina invaded and captured the Falkland Islands, 1982. Today is the Feast Day of Saints Apollinaris and Theodosia. St Francis of Paola, St John Payne, St Mary of Egypt, St Nicetas or Nizet of Lyons and St Zosimus.

Lectures

National Gallery: Nicholas Penny, "Roads and Ways (I): Veronese, The Family of Darius before Alexander", 1pm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Ann Pefferles, "Patronage in Indian Art", 2.30pm. Tate Gallery: Jonathan Black, "Paul Nash and Unit One", 1pm. National Portrait Gallery: Liz Riddell, "Women Artists and Photographers", 1.10pm.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment moves the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment moves the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment moves the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

LAW REPORT: 2 APRIL 1998

Competition amounted to pool betting

Commissioners of Customs and Excise v News International Newspapers Ltd; Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Beldam, Lord Justice May and Sir Christopher Slade) 30 March 1998

ENTRANTS to the "Fantasy Fund Manager" competition run by the *Sunday Times* in 1994 were engaged in pool betting, and the newspaper was accordingly liable to excise duty on the pooled entry fees.

The Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal of News International Newspapers Ltd against a decision of Mr Justice Kay, upholding an assessment by the Commissioners of Customs and Excise to excise duty under the Betting and Gaming Duties Act 1981.

The appellants were the proprietors of the *Sunday Times*. In 1994 they organised and ran a competition for readers

called the "Fantasy Fund Manager Competition". Entrants paid an entry fee of £5 to select a portfolio of shares to invest in an imaginary fund of £10m. The portfolios were valued each week and the portfolio which recorded the greatest gain was awarded a prize of £1,000. The winning portfolio at the closing date was awarded the grand prize of £100,000. In the event of a tie, all prizes would be equally divided between the winners.

The Commissioners of Customs and Excise contended that those taking part in the competition were engaged in pool betting within section 10(2)(b) of the Betting and Gaming Duties Act 1981, and accordingly assessed News International to excise duty at 37.5 per cent on the pooled entry fees.

Andrew Thornhill QC, Stephen Markham and Andrew Birchmough (for

& Co) for News International; Rupert Anderson (Solicitor for HM Customs and Excise) for the Commissioners.

Lord Justice Beldam said that section 10(2)(b) of the 1981 Act provided that a bet would be deemed to be made by way of pool betting if it was made on terms that the winnings of such of those persons as are winners shall be, or shall include, an amount (not determined by reference to stake money paid or agreed to be paid by those persons) which is divisible in any proportions among such of those persons who are winners.

News International's appeal against the assessment to the VAT and Duties Tribunal had been allowed, on the basis that the true nature of the payments made by the entrants to the competition was that of once-and-for-all entrance fees.

The Commissioners had appealed to the High Court, which had restored their assessment.

The judge had held that the tribunal had concentrated on the commonly understood notion of what amounted to pool betting and had paid insufficient regard to the definition in section 10 of the Act. News International had appealed, contending that since the word "bet" was not defined in the 1981 Act it must be given its ordinary meaning, and that the competitors' transactions did not amount to betting in the ordinary sense of the word.

It had been argued for News International that when a competitor entered a competition he was not by entering merely forecasting a result. He was simply paying for the privilege of entering. The selection of a Fantasy Fund portfolio could be compared with producing the solution to a chess problem or a crossword puzzle.

In deciding whether those taking part in the "Fantasy Fund Managers Competition" were engaged in pool betting, the court had to consider not simply the meaning of "betting", but the meaning of "betting by way of pool betting" in the 1981 Act. The competitors were making a forecast of an uncertain future event, namely whether a portfolio selected by them would, on a given date, have the greatest value of all the portfolios selected, and if on any occasion there was more than one winner, the amount of the prize was to be divided equally among them. Those forecasts were, accordingly, bets deemed to be made by way of pool betting within the meaning of s 10(2)(b), and it followed that News International was liable to pay excise duty under the 1981 Act.

Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

FTSE breaks 6,000 as rates tension rises

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

THE London stock market yesterday shrugged off the rising tension over interest rates, closing above the 6,000 mark for the first time.

Ahead of next week's meeting of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee, the latest business survey showed a surprise pick-up in manufacturing last month, as strong domestic orders outpaced a drop in export orders for the third month running.

The pound remained at its uncomfortably high level, with the index edging up by 0.1 to 108.7. The dollar also crept higher, boosted by a similar survey showing strong activity in industry.

The Conservatives tried to make political capital out of the mounting complaints of exporters, with William Hague, the Tory leader, warning in the House of Commons that manufacturing industry was being driven to the brink of recession. Tony Blair replied: "It is vital that decisions in respect of the pound and economic policy are taken on a long-term, not short-term, basis so that we never go

back to Tory boom and bust."

In a speech last night, Eddie George, governor of the Bank of England, described movements in sterling as a "roller-coaster ride" and said the strength of the pound posed a real dilemma on monetary policy. He said the Bank did take full account of the impact of the strong pound on activity in assessing policy.

But he said: "It nevertheless remains at the margin a fine judgement whether domestic demand will in fact slow soon enough and fast enough to avoid inflation eventually picking up."

While giving no clue about the likely outcome next week, he echoed the Chancellor of the Exchequer in concluding: "At the end of the day it cannot make sense to sacrifice our objective of long-term domestic stability."

Meanwhile, there was no let-up in the pressure from industry. The Institute of Management reported that among a small survey of its members, six out of 10 in manufacturing wanted to see a reduction in interest rates, while in services more than five out of 10 thought they should stay the same. Predictably, only a minority saw any case for higher interest rates.

Attention today will focus on Mr George, who is due to give evidence to the Treasury Select Committee. But City analysts predicted that the outcome of next week's meeting of the MPC would be another split vote resulting in no change in the cost of borrowing from the current level of 7.25 per cent.

Yesterday's survey from the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply showed an acceleration in manufacturing activity, with the index rising to 52.2 from 51. It has been above the watershed of 50 for 22 months running.

Home demand for consumer goods was particularly buoyant, with output expanding in March to meet stronger order books.

Peter Thomson, director-general of the CIPS, pointed to a drop in export orders for the third month running. In addition, respondents reported a fall in employment for the first time since August, and the price of raw materials fell for the 30th consecutive month.

Figures from the Halifax showed that house prices rose by 0.6 per cent in March. Japan's keenly anticipated programme of financial deregulation, the so-called "Big Bang", began with a feeble fizz yesterday, with share prices falling amid continuing economic sluggishness.



Second course: Suh Sang-rok, 62, former vice-chairman of Sammi group, one of South Korea's giant family-run conglomerates, is on a training course following the group's collapse - learning how to be a waiter. He says he feels fortunate to have a job in these troubled times. Photograph: Reuters

Toyko Big Bang a damp squib

By Richard Lloyd Parry
in Tokyo

JAPAN'S keenly anticipated programme of financial deregulation, the so-called "Big Bang", began with a feeble fizz yesterday, with share prices falling amid continuing economic sluggishness.

The Nikkei Stock Average fell by 285.5 points to close nearly 2 per cent down at 16,241.66, on reports that a property company, Daiichi Corporation, would go into liquidation, leaving debts of 440bn yen (£2bn).

Unsettled at the news, the latest in a series of corporate bankruptcies, offset mounting expectations that the govern-

ment will soon announce a tax cut of 4 trillion yen in an attempt to stimulate the economy. More bad news is likely this morning with the publication of the "tankan", a quarterly index of business sentiment, which is expected to record a further plunge in corporate morale.

Gloom about the economy overshadowed the launch of the "Big Bang", a series of deregulatory steps intended to emulate the financial reforms carried out in New York and London in the 1970s and 1980s.

Ryutaro Hashimoto, the Japanese Prime Minister, is arriving in London today for the second Asem summit between Asian and European countries. Tony Blair, opening the meet-

ing formally tomorrow, will tell the Asian leaders that Europeans are not "fairweather friends", and that both regions must work together to solve Asia's financial problems.

However, when Japan's finance minister visited London in February for the G7 summit, he found himself on the receiving end of a lecture about the need to stimulate his flagging economy and financial sector.

With the Asian crisis high on the agenda, the Prime Minister will stress the importance of keeping trade and investment flowing, and opening new markets.

The summit will also see the formal launch of a trust fund, set up at the World Bank on the

initiative of the UK, to help Asian countries reform their financial systems. Britain has contributed £5m to the fund.

Japan's financial reforms have been scheduled to take effect between 1996 and 2001, but two of the key measures came into effect yesterday, the first day of the new financial year.

As in Britain's "Big Bang" in 1986, stock broking commissions have been liberalised, with the intention of opening up the stock market to a much wider variety of institutional players. As the reforms progress, stock brokers, banks and insurance companies will be allowed to compete in one another's businesses.

Foreign exchange controls

were also removed, making easier for Japanese companies and individuals to invest abroad. This appears to have been a factor in the fall of the Nikkei as Japanese funds can now flow more readily to overseas markets where they can benefit from better interest and a wider range of investment possibilities. In the long term, however, the measures are intended to have a stimulant effect on Japanese institutions by exposing them to foreign competition. A new system, known as prompt corrective action, allows the Ministry of Finance to close down banks which are judged to have insufficient capital.

Outlook, page

Signs of divide between north and south grow

By Diane Coyle

THE NORTH-SOUTH divide has re-emerged and will grow even wider, according to a stark warning today. The combination of stagnation in manufacturing and the clampdown on public spending have harmed job and output prospects in the North, while the South-east is enjoying a boom thanks to flourishing private sector services.

The gap in employment growth between the north and south last year - 1 per cent versus 2.3 per cent - was the biggest since 1984, according to regional consultancy Business Strategies.

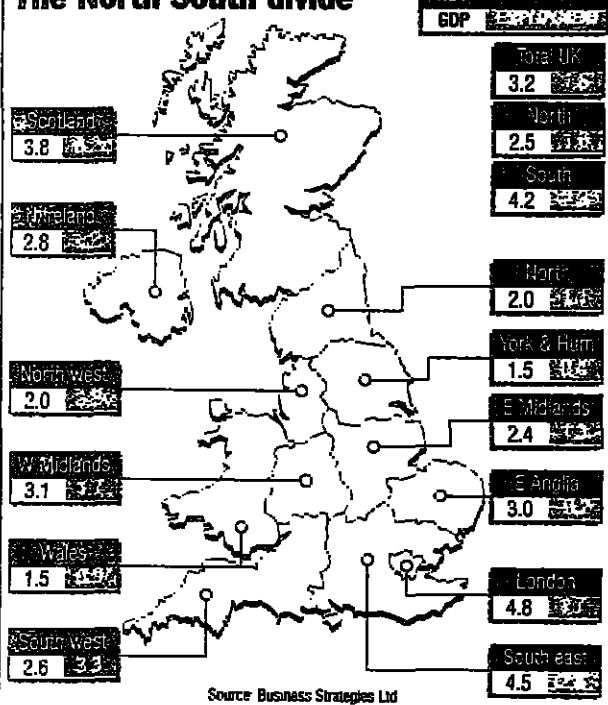
It forecasts slower jobs growth in both this year, but a widening gap. And next year could bring a shake-out of 6-7 per cent of manufacturing jobs, with dismal results for industrial regions.

"There are lots of signs of the north-south divide opening up again," said Neil Blake, research director. "There is a risk of overheating, the place we have to look for is in the South-east of England."

But he said the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee would have to react to what was happening in the booming capital, with the slowdown taking place in Wales, Scotland and the northern region. He predicted an increase in interest rates within the next few months, saying that a continuing boom in the South-east would only mean a higher recession everywhere later.

A further risk to some regions

The North South divide



stems from the danger of reductions in investment by Asian companies. Although a small proportion of total investment, inward investment from Asia has created a large share of the jobs.

Between 1985 and 1997, big Japanese and Asian projects accounted for 43,560 jobs out of a total of 105,160. These were heavily skewed towards Scotland, Wales, the North-east and Northern Ireland. "Wales has the most to lose," warned Mr Blake. The underlying regional gap stems from the greater dependence of areas such as the Midlands and the North of England

on manufacturing. Industrial output is forecast to slow to virtually zero this year, with a one-in-four danger of outright recession.

Within manufacturing, only engineering is likely to enjoy decent growth. This will be driven mainly by a boom in aerospace orders and new investment in rail rolling stock by the privatised operators.

The Government's tough control of public spending will exacerbate the divide, Mr Blake said. "The less prosperous the area, the more dependent it is on the public sector."

Axe falls in CWC review

By Peter Thal Larsen

THE BLOOD-LETTING has begun at Cable & Wireless Communications, the cable and telephone operator, ahead of a wide-ranging restructuring which the company will announce today.

CWC parted company with Philip Langsdale, its IT director, on Tuesday following a review by the accountants Coopers & Lybrand. Ted Hatch, head of networks, is likely to be moved to another part of the group. The two were part of CWC's 12-strong senior management team. Neither had a seat on the company's board. It is not clear whether Mr Langsdale will be replaced.

As part of the "optimum restructuring review" initiated by Graham Wallace, CWC's chief executive, Coopers is understood to have asked every CWC manager to write a detailed job description. Where two descriptions are similar one of the jobs is likely to be phased out. CWC will today argue the re-

view will increase efficiency among the backroom functions, freeing up more resources which can be devoted to improving customer service. CWC has concluded it must concentrate on fast-growing segments of the market such as small and medium-sized businesses.

Up to 2,000 of the company's 12,000 posts may be cut, although large numbers of staff will be offered jobs elsewhere in the organisation to reduce the redundancy bill.

CWC was created last year through a four-way merger of telephone group Mercury and cable operators Nynex Cablecoms, Bell Cablemedia and Videotron. Since the deal, executives have struggled to merge the four operations into a single entity and stamp out duplication of jobs.

Last year 400 of the 1,000 managers inherited at the time of the merger were axed. But the Coopers review is understood to have identified further scope for efficiency.

BT and Standard Life in hand to hand combat

By Andrew Verity

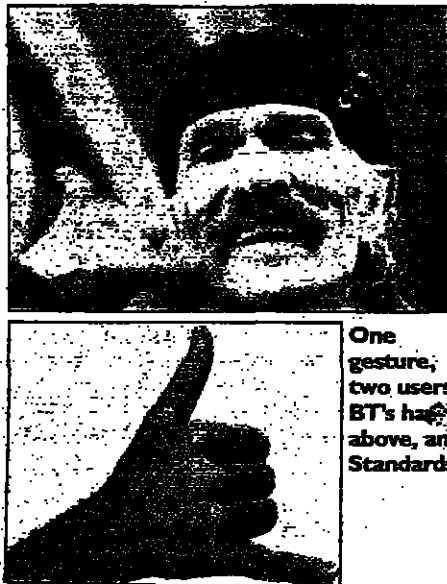
IT'S NOT EASY being an advertising executive in 1998. Use what you think is a universal symbol to promote a client's product, and up pops a door Scottish bank to call you a copycat.

Standard Life Bank yesterday accused BT of pinching its corporate image - a picture of a hand bent as if to make a telephone call.

The bank, which was launched using exactly this logo on 5 January, said BT's "Good Vibrations" TV ad, which features happy telephone customers sticking out their thumbs and little fingers, was a copy of its own promotional video. The bank said that BT had felt the need to copy our "hand phone" logo, although we understand that imitation is the highest form of flattery," said Jim Spowart, managing director.

He says his logo was designed by The Union, an Edinburgh-based advertising agency, and is "an integral part of the bank's identity and its advertising". Standard Life Bank had spent more than £2m promoting the brand only to find that Abbott Mead Vickers, the UK's largest advertiser, had used the logo for its BT campaign, he said.

"We are disappointed that one of the UK's largest advertisers, using one of the UK's largest advertising budgets, has chosen to use this device, especially as we have been using it continuously in print advertising since the bank's successful launch," said Mr Spowart.



A BT spokeswoman said: "We would strongly object to any suggestion that we have infringed their rights. It's a universal symbol for operating your phone. We don't think it could conceivably belong to any one individual."

The symbol was used in 1991 by BT in a short running TV campaign. But Standard Life Bank insist they are the proprietor, applying in October to use the hand-phone logo as a trademark.

STOCK MARKETS

Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	6017.80	85.40	1.44	6105.80	5128.10	3.37
FTSE 250	5334.80	9.40	0.17	5544.40	4384.20	2.99
FTSE 350	2892.50	32.70	1.14	2917.00	2075.70	3.30
FTSE All Share	2813.33	21.97	0.78	2839.77	2056.07	3.27
FTSE Smallcap	2534.70	5.20	0.20	2638.60	2182.10	2.89
FTSE Midcap	1409.90	-0.70	-0.05	1415.30	1225.20	3.22
FTSE AIM	1069.40	0.30	0.03	1099.70	869.90	1.66
Dow Jones	2813.22	13.43	0.48	2859.24	2350.78	1.53
Nikkei	16241.66	-285.51	-1.76	20910.79	14488.21	0.99
Hang Seng	11331.42	-187.26	-1.65	16820.31	7909.13	3.56
Dax	5184.21	51.86	1.02	5104.56	3192.33	1.57

INTEREST RATES

Index	3 month	1 yr	5 yr	10 yr	1 yr	5 yr	10 yr
UK	7.60	1.18	7.62	0.62	5.91	1.80	5.81
US	5.71	-0.11	5.88	-0.47	5.66	-1.20	5.94
Japan	0.70	0.13	0.68	-0.04	1.84	-0.58	2.45
Germany	3.60	0.25	3.90	0.46	4.93	-1.06	5.51

Index	3 month	1 yr	5 yr	10 yr	1 yr	5 yr	10 yr
UK	612.50	45.00	7.82				
US	269.00	28.00	7.76				
Japan	406.00	25.50	6.70				
Imperial Ch Inds	1125.00	60.00	5.63				

CURRENCIES

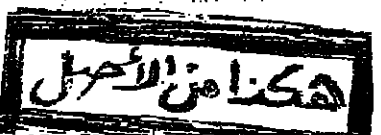
Index	at 5pm	Change	Yr Ago	at 5pm	Change	Yr Ago
Dollar	1.6711	-0.006	1.5488	114.10	2.80	110.88
Yen	223.05	+0.01	275.22	160.30	3.40	165.03
£ Index	108.80	0.00	96.70			

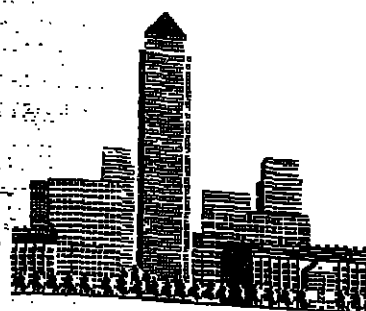
Index	at 5pm	Change	Yr Ago	at 5pm	Change	Yr Ago
Frank (S)	13.76	-0.01	14.15			
Gold (\$)	368.05	0.10	351.98			
Silver (\$)	6.47	0.12	6.03			

TOURIST RATES

Australia (\$)	2.4391	Malaysia (ringgits)	5.9036
Austria (schillings)	21.06	Malta (lira)	0.6443
Belgium (francs)	61.79	Netherlands (guilders)	3.3782
Canada (\$)	2.3096	New Zealand (\$)	2.9707
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8703	Norway (krone)	0.47
Denmark (krone)	11.50	Portugal (escudos)	304.65
Finland (markka)	9.1709	Saudi Arabia (rials)	6.097
France (francs)	10.25	Singapore (\$)	2.5675
Germany (marks)	3.0100	South Africa (rand)	8.0825
Greece (drachma)	515.18	Spain (pesetas)	254.07
Hong Kong (\$)	12.56	Sweden (krone)	8.08
Ireland (pounds)	1.1908	Switzerland (francs)	2.4882
Israel (shekels)	5.5526	Thailand (bahts)	59.00
Italy (lira)	2.569	Turkey (liras)	390.666
Japan (yen)	220.55	USA (\$)	1.6331

Source: Thomas Cook
Rates for indication purposes only





OUTLOOK ON PROBLEMS FOR THE US TOBACCO SETTLEMENT, FINANCIAL REFORM IN JAPAN, AND THE ITC DECISION ON BUNDLING TV CHANNELS

Cigarette makers' deal goes up in smoke

THE SMOKE was already rising from the global tobacco settlement reached in the US last June between cigarette manufacturers and state authorities. Now Congress has lit a match under it. By this time next week there may be nothing left but ashes.

As the Arizona senator John McCain has piloted the Tobacco Bill through Congress, the financial health warning on the side of the package has grown larger and larger.

Nine months ago the cost of the 25-year deal to industry was set at \$368bn. Now it has ballooned to something not much short of \$600bn. Of this, \$125bn will have to be handed over in the first six years, irrespective of how much worse the market and regulatory climate in the US get for tobacco.

The industry thought it had struck a deal whereby it coughed up the cash and took voluntary steps to wean teenagers off the weed. In return it would get immunity from further legal action and punitive damages for past misbehaviour.

It now transpires that the only limit is on legal payouts exceeding \$6.5bn a year, that the settlement will not cover class actions brought by litigants other than state authorities and that it will have to meet mandatory targets for curbing teenage smoking. To cap it all, senators yesterday passed a resolution demanding that no legal protection be afforded to the tobacco industry. It was a non-binding resolution but nevertheless it gives a fair indication of the way the smoke is blowing in Congress.

Faced with this, the industry has sat back, taken a long drag and decided the settlement is not worth a candle. It will

legally challenge some of the provisions but the settlement is increasingly looking dead in the water. Investors have understandably become unsettled and share prices have begun to wobble but nowhere near as much as they would have done had the industry indicated it was prepared to accept the new settlement.

BAT, which is number three in the American cigarette market, was already looking at forfeiting most of its US profits to fund the \$368m settlement, even with a \$1.10 cent hike in a packet of 20. A settlement costing almost twice that would, says BAT, put it in the industry out of business.

That would be one way of cutting smoking. But it would not help the US government fund the astronomical Medicare bill it already faces to tackle past and present smoke-related illnesses. Smoking kills and there is therefore a lot to be said for Congress playing hardball with the tobacco industry. Particularly since, unlike the situation here, US tobacco taxes do not come remotely close to covering the costs of smoking to the health service.

But there is a point at which Congress will kill the goose that lays the golden egg, to the disadvantage of its own public finances and public health. That point looks to be near.

Not such a Big Bang in Japan

HOWEVER anti-climactic its beginning yesterday, Tokyo's "Big Bang" has the potential to be the biggest institutional

change to take place in Japan since the war. If they are followed through, the rolling programme of financial reforms, more a series of canon salvos than a single unified explosion, will throw wide open one of the biggest and most lucrative markets in the world.

One third of the world's savings - some \$5,400bn worth - are held in Japan. For decades, Japanese savers - cautious by nature and starved of choice - have put up with derisory interest rates in order to allow Japanese banks, with the connivance of the Ministry of Finance, to lend on the cheap to companies in which they then invest.

The strategy has come horribly unstuck, not just in Japan but across the Pacific Rim. Protected markets, inefficient financial institutions, cronyism and corruption have conspired to leave the banks with enormous problem loans and seriously weakened balance sheets. Hardly the most auspicious basis from which to launch such fundamental reform.

The documents detailing the various stages of the Bang stand four inches thick, but its broad purpose is twofold: to tear down the barriers which prevent Japanese banks, brokerages and insurance companies from competing in one another's businesses; and to expose them to competition from foreign rivals all over the world.

If the reforms work as intended then we will see an extraordinary sea-change with weak domestic banks going to the wall and the creation of a huge mutual fund

market which would not only serve its corporate sector better but transform returns for savers and investors.

But don't bet on it. There are already some signs of backsliding. The commitment to end exchange controls is hemmed in with catches while the willingness of the Japanese government to bale out 21 banks only last month with a ¥1,800bn capital injection hardly looks like the act of an administration eager to usher in competition.

Japan's institutions will adapt to survive. Throughout history, they have had a knack of transforming themselves on the outside while retaining their essence within. In the 1860s, the country opened up and modernised itself after 300 years of feudal isolation; and yet the caution, group consciousness and uniformity of the feudal era remain as strong in some ways as they were 200 years ago.

Five years ago, to take another example, observers marvelled at the sudden overthrow of the Liberal Democratic Party, after forty odd years in power; but now it is back, arguably with a firmer grip on power than before.

Politically, Big Bang is a risky undertaking for the prime minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto with a lot of big vested interests ranged against the project. If he falls there is no guarantee that a successor will pursue reform with such vigour.

The domestic bankruptcies which are bound to result from increased foreign competition may foster a nationalist backlash - only this year, a right wing gangster held

an official of the Tokyo Stock Exchange hostage for five hours demanding that Big Bang be abandoned as an unpatriotic sell out to the west.

Powerful vested interests stand to lose out in the process of reform and though they may appear to be on the ropes, they are not yet beaten.

Real choice for pay-TV viewers

COUCH potatoes should applaud. After 18 months of investigation the Independent Television Commission has finally concluded that pay-television consumers are best served if they can choose which channels they want to subscribe to.

After all, it was always a non-sense that they be required to take a package that included the Weather Channel or the Carlton Food Network when all they really wanted was the football on Sky Sports. By introducing real choice the ITC has ensured that channels that no-one wants to watch will either have to sharpen up their act or wither and die.

But what about BSkyB? Until now, the practice of bundling has allowed Rupert Murdoch's broadcaster to charge equal amounts for channels with such varying appeal as Sky One (which is popular) and Sky News (which is not). Yesterday's changes mean Sky will have to start charging the full whack for the popular channels. Will the viewers accept it? Watch this space.

US tobacco settlement on brink of collapse

By Andrew Yates in London and David Osborne in New York

THE AMERICAN tobacco industry's landmark \$368.5bn (£233bn) settlement with US states was on the brink of collapse yesterday. Cigarette manufacturers threatened to abandon the deal in response to a move by the US Congress to raise the total payment to as much as \$600bn amid growing hostility towards the industry.

A key committee in the US Senate is set to pass a draft bill which imposes much tougher terms on the tobacco giants and will replace the agreement reached with state attorney generals last June. Notably, it strips away most of the legal protections written into the original pact.

Under that agreement, the tobacco firms would pay \$368.5bn over 25 years and take voluntary steps to curb advertising and reduce smoking

among teenagers. In return, they would earn a ban on class-action suits against them as well as immunity from punitive damages for past misconduct.

The Senate bill, drafted by Senator John McCain of Arizona, would offer no such blanket immunity. Instead it would merely set a cap of \$6.5bn on civil liability damages that the industry would ever have to pay in one year.

Big tobacco companies, including Brown & Williamson, a subsidiary of BAT Industries, warned yesterday that they would not sign the new deal, claiming it would force some manufacturers into bankruptcy.

The tobacco companies are likely to walk away from the entire deal if the US Congress is unwilling to compromise - and at the moment it shows no signs of doing so.

The tobacco industry is also threatening to take legal action if the US authorities force com-

panies to cut back on cigarette advertising or make them provide extra money to help prevent young people taking up smoking. The manufacturers will drop these measures if the wider agreement breaks down.

BAT said yesterday it was willing to return to the courtroom to fight lung cancer victims if the deal floundered. It also launched an attack on the White House for failing to back the original agreement.

A spokesman for the group said: "At the moment the deal is dead. We are bitterly disappointed with the White House for not delivering a better agreement."

While the McCain bill faces several hurdles, the move by Congress has left a cloud of uncertainty hanging over the industry and it sent tobacco shares skidding in New York. Shares in RJR Nabisco, whose subsidiary RJ Reynolds makes Camel cigarettes, and Philip Morris,

which makes Marlboro, continued to slide yesterday. In morning trading yesterday, Philip Morris was off \$1.4375. On Tuesday, Philip Morris stocks dropped \$1.3125 to \$41.6875 while shares in RJR Nabisco slid \$1.875 to \$31.3125. In London BAT shares eased 5.5p to 603.5p.

A withdrawal of the tobacco companies from the settlement process could lead to all-out warfare between them and lawmakers, leading to long instability in share prices.

The negative sentiment in Congress was vividly demonstrated, meanwhile, by a non-binding resolution that was overwhelmingly passed by senators 79-19 on Tuesday demanding that no legal protections be afforded to the industry.

With elections in November, it seems that few in Congress dare expose themselves as friends of the tobacco industry. Outlook, this page

Schroders takes first place in merger league

By Lea Paterson

SCHROEDERS has stolen Lazard Brothers' mantle of number one UK mergers and acquisitions adviser, according to a new survey.

Despite the numerous stalled mergers at the beginning of this year, the first three months of 1998 have been a record period for UK corporate activity.

These are the key findings of the latest *Acquisitions Monthly* survey of UK merger and acquisition activity, which also estimated City advisers lost £400m when the £43bn merger of Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham, the pharmaceutical giants, fell apart earlier this year.

Morgan Stanley and Lazard Brothers, Glaxo and SmithKline's financial advisers, did not come away from the deal empty handed.

Philip Healey, editor of *Acquisitions Monthly*, said: "Advisers working on the failed deal will still have picked up around £20m in fees, while those involved

Top 10 advisers

Rank	Adviser	Value, £m
1	Schroders (5)	4,292
2	Deutsche Morgan Grenfell (12)	2,741
3	CSFB (1)	1,648
4	SBC Warburg Dillon Read (2)	1,618
5	NM Rothschild (7)	1,552
6	Morgan Stanley (4)	1,535
7	Lazard Bros (1)	658
8	DLJ Phoenix Securities (17)	634
9	Robert Fleming (15)	502
10	Baring Brothers (13)	482

Full year 1997 rankings in brackets. Source: *Acquisitions Monthly*

with the lapsed Reed Elsevier merger with Wolters Kluwer took home an estimated £15m."

Between January and March of this year, *Acquisitions Monthly* recorded 438 UK transactions with a total value of £16.2bn. During the same period last year, 319 transactions were recorded with a total value of £10.7bn.

Schroders advised on six of the 41 UK public takeovers, with a combined value of £4.3bn. It was also involved in the largest UK public takeover so far this year - that of Allied Colloids by Ciba of Switzerland.

Lloyds TSB takes £100m loss on Black Horse sale

LLOYDS TSB, the banking group, is to take a £100m loss following the sale of Black Horse, its estate agency group, to Bradford & Bingley Building Society for £56m. Lloyds said it would make a £30m profit on the sale itself, but, after charging goodwill arising on the acquisition and previously written off to reserves, it would include a net loss of £100m in its profit and loss account in the first half of this year.

Liffe considers full-timer

THE LONDON International Financial Futures and Options Exchange (Liffe) has confirmed it is considering having a full-time chairman as part of proposed changes to its management structure. Liffe's plans for change, due for debate at a forthcoming extraordinary general meeting, also include proposals to reduce the size of its board. Liffe is engaged in a battle for market share with the electronic Deutsche Terminbörse (DTB), which yesterday said it saw a record 15.7 million contracts traded last month.

£2.1m gains for directors

TWO DIRECTORS of Independent Insurance have netted paper profits of around £2.1m each, the company disclosed yesterday. Philip Condon, deputy managing director, and Alan Clarke, head of the group's international division, exercised 150,000 options each at a market price of 172.75p. The options were granted between 1991 and 1994 at prices ranging between 20p and 27.5p. Mr Clarke also sold 77,601 ordinary shares at 162.5p, worth around £13m.

FSA appeal to investors

THE FINANCIAL Services Authority, the City's top regulator, has issued a public appeal for investors to come forward if they have dealt with Stirling Montague & Speke, an unauthorised firm operating from offices in Jermyn Street, London. The regulator yesterday obtained a High Court injunction freezing the worldwide assets of Steven Rhodes, who used the firm to sell shares in a US company called International Resorts and Entertainment Group. The FSA can be contacted on 0171 638 1240.

BICC wins hospital project

A CONSORTIUM led by BICC, the cables to construction group, has won a private finance initiative (PFI) deal to build a new hospital for North Durham. The consortium, which includes the Royal Bank of Scotland, will provide £96m of finance for the project. Construction is due to start immediately.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover	Pre-tax	EPS	Dividend
British Source Group (P)	30.47m (26.34m)	1.658m (1.217m)	9.87p (6.59p)	4.0p (3.50p)
CIC Properties (P)	11.35m (7.38m)	4.1m (2.35m)	18.8p (12.3p)	3.3p (3.0p)
French Connection (P)	82.7m (82.0m)	8.3m (8.2m)	27.5p (17.6p)	3.25p (-)
Independent Newspapers (P)	588.8m (419.1m)	100.1m (73.5m)	23.0p (16.5p)	7.8p (6.5p)
London Press (P)	212.0m (165.0m)	34.6m (24.1m)	11.85p (10.20p)	3.0p (2.45p)
Lands Improvement (P)	12.03m (9.16m)	0.702m (4.051m)	3.25p (12.30p)	4.75p (4.75p)
Alfred McAlpine (P)	665.1m (527.4m)	20.734m (9.425m)	16.8p (10.0p)	7.5p (7.0p)
Technipat (P)**	53.04m (68.12m)	8.243m (16.806m)	0.46 (1.06)	nil (-)

(P) = Profit. * First financial period. ** New listed shares.

GUS bid for Argos gets Beckett OK

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

THE GOVERNMENT gave the green light to Great Universal Stores' £1.6bn bid for Argos yesterday when Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, accepted the recommendation of the Office of Fair Trading that the deal did not need to be investigated on competition grounds.

The clearance, which had been expected, pushed Argos shares 20.5p higher to 645p on expectations that GUS would need to increase its existing cash offer of 570p to seal victory. GUS shares closed 232.5p higher at 765p.

The decision also re-starts the bid timetable and Argos will now publish its final defence document on Friday. Analysts expect the company to announce plans to return £350m-£400m to shareholders.

GUS hit out at Argos, saying the "quick fix" solutions of Stuart Rose, the new chief executive, threatened the business's prosperity. Lord Wolfson, GUS's chairman, said plans to increase margins risked alienating Argos's customer base and that sharing its customer data with Littlewoods in a planned fashion mail order joint venture was "folly".

Mr Rose countered by saying: "On Friday when we add our financial arguments, we will demonstrate to shareholders that the substantive value of their business makes GUS's bid look woefully inadequate."

ITC plans to outlaw bundling on pay TV

By Peter Thal Larsen

THE INDEPENDENT Television Commission, the broadcasting watchdog, yesterday struck a blow for consumer choice by proposing that the combined sale of large packages of pay-TV channels, known as "bundling", should be outlawed.

After investigating the subject for almost a year and a half, the ITC yesterday concluded that current practices "restrict and distort viewer choice". Sir Robin Bignier, chairman, said that the ITC's proposals would "open up the market and allow retailers to provide viewers with greater freedom of choice".

The ITC's proposals include the abolition of clauses that allow channel suppliers to demand that their channels be shown to a majority of a pay-TV operator's subscribers. These so-

called minimum carriage requirements have forced cable TV operators to offer subscribers a large package of basic channels rather than allowing them to choose between several smaller packages.

The ITC also recommended that bundling of more than one premium channel should only be allowed if viewers also have the choice of subscribing to each channel on its own.

The ITC said it would seek comments on the proposals before making a final decision next month.

Television executives broadly applauded the changes. "I naturally welcome anything that gives the consumer greater flexibility," said Roger Luard, chief executive of Flextech.

The abolition of minimum carriage requirements will allow cable TV operators to offer

smaller packages of channels at cheaper prices, thereby attracting a greater number of viewers.

Penetration of cable television is currently stuck at about one in five viewers. However, Telewest, the country's largest operator, said that trials with smaller packages in Dunbarton and Newcastle had drastically increased penetration levels.

However, British Sky Broadcasting, the satellite broadcaster, was less enthusiastic. Industry sources speculated that the company would have to adjust its charges in order to protect its margins.

The changes are expected to sound the death knell for several less popular channels, however. Telewest said that, at the moment, most channels are currently watched by less than half of its subscribers.

Glaxo chairman speaks out

By Andrew Yates

THE CHAIRMAN of Glaxo Wellcome yesterday said that hostile bids for major pharmaceutical companies were "almost impossible" because of the high stock market valuations across the industry. But Sir Richard Sykes did not rule out seeking another merger partner after the collapse of talks with SmithKline Beecham and believes that the industry will continue to consolidate.

In his first public comments

since the end of the £100bn merger talks which could have created the biggest drugs group in the world, Sir Richard told the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee that Glaxo would consider seeking other partners if it would enhance the research and development of new drugs.

He said the talks broke due to differing cultures and management styles. "A dispute about the vision of the future led to a breakdown in discussions. When asked how such a large merger

could have been aborted over the "pecking order of five directors", Sir Richard said that morale in the new company would have been affected if there was not harmony in the boardroom.

Although he was guarded in giving reasons for the collapse of the talks, Sir Richard said there was no legal impediment to their re-opening.

Sir Richard also denied Glaxo shareholders were in open revolt over the collapse of the talks, which wiped around £1.4bn off the value of both groups.

THE INDEPENDENT WIN special interest break in Garden of England



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We have one weekend break based on two people sharing which is to be taken from 12th-14th June 1998. To enter this competition, simply dial the number below, answer the following question on line and



Q: Name the garden created by the late Vita Sackville-West.

For a free copy of "Getaway Breaks", featuring short breaks and longer holidays in England, Scotland and Wales, please ring 0930 563554 and to check availability of "The Garden in the Garden of England" weekend package cost £199 per person - ring 01395 266448 or 01395 269661

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THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

A great story in local news

THE LOCAL newspaper market has never been far from the City headlines over the last 18 months. The industry fireworks have been ignited by the big media groups who have put their regional newspapers up for auction to concentrate on more glamorous TV and publishing interests. The rapid consolidation of the market has led to the creation of powerful and acquisition hungry newspaper groups such as Johnston Press.

Johnston put its name on the map by buying Emap's 65 regional titles for £213m. The deal looks well timed. The strong economy has caused revenues to take off across the industry last year, driven by a sharp rise in advertising income.

Johnston's like-for-like advertising revenue rose 8 per cent thanks to a 30 per cent rise in recruitment commercials. Economies of scale from the Emap deal and a fall in newspaper prices saw margins jump from 16 to 21 per cent. Together these led to a 44 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £34.6m in 1997.

The slowdown in the economy raises concerns that Johnston will be hard pressed to continue growing at this sort of rate and the group acknowledges that advertising growth is bound to slow. But analysts predict it is still likely to grow at 5 per cent this year. And there is still plenty of scope to cut costs. The margins at the Emap business are still only 21 per cent compared to 27 per cent at the existing Johnston titles.

The £52m acquisition of Home Counties Newspapers has been held up by an MMC enquiry. Even so the rationalisation of the industry is bound to provide Johnston with further buying opportunities. And as the group expands so does its buying power which will reduce costs further.

Johnston is also working hard to clear out the worst performing bits of its business. Its troubled book binding has gone and the stationery wholesaling business will probably be next.

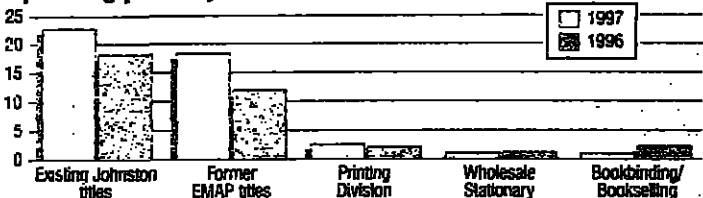
Johnston's shares rose another 3.5p to 231.5p on the results. Analysts forecast full year profits of around £43m, putting the shares on a prospective PE ratio of 16. The shares remain good value.

Johnston Press: At a glance

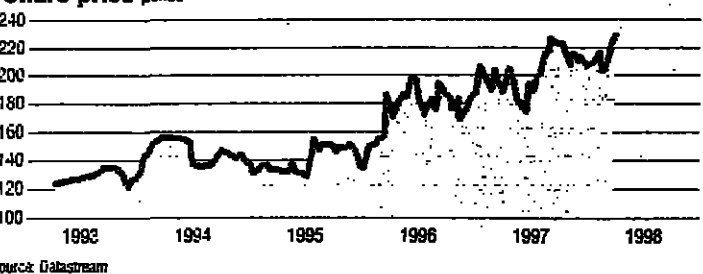
Market value: £464m, share price 231.5p (+3.5p)

Five-year record	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Turnover (£m)	88	95	102	165	212
Pre-tax profits (£m)	12.5	14.7	16.9	24.1	34.6
Earnings per share (p)	1.6	1.9	2.1	2.5	3.0
Dividends per share (p)	6.3	7.9	7.9	9.8	13.1

Operating profit by division 2000s



Share price pence



Laying the ghosts in construction

EVEN now, it is hard to mention a construction company's results without referring to the building slump which almost crippled the industry in the first half of the 1990s. However Alfred McAlpine laid some ghosts to rest yesterday by announcing a doubling of profits to £24.1m for 1997.

Back in 1995, the effects of the construction downturn were still very much in evidence. McAlpine was reconstructing itself but ran up a £101m deficit in write-downs and losses from discontinued businesses which led to the resignation of Peter Parkin, then chairman and chief executive.

His successor as chief executive, Oliver Whitehead, pursued a tough-minded strategy, quickly exiting from general building work - to cheers from the stock market. The group has focused on construction services, such as maintenance, and special engineering projects, including football stadiums such as Huddersfield Town.

By ditching the cumbersome process of dealing with architects as agents, and by forming direct partnerships with customers, the special projects division returned to the black last year.

The second wing of McAlpine's new strategy was to capitalise on a recovery in the housing market while shedding the loss-making US housebuilders. In May the company bought its troubled rival, Rainco, for £44m, an investment which has already proved earnings enhancing. Ignoring restructuring costs house building profits shot up to £9.1m to £21.4m.

Prospects remain bright for the house building division. McAlpine has been contracted to take part in a 3,300-home "new village" seven miles west of Cambridge, to be called Cambourne. The company already saw house-building jump last year, from

1,688 homes in 1996 to 2,674 in 1997.

Merrill Lynch forecasts that full-year profits for 1998 will grow to £34m. The share rose 5.5p to 176.5p yesterday, putting the group on a forward PE ratio of 8. Considering its construction industry peers are on multiples closer to 11, the shares look good value. Buy.

The Connection w.e.a.r.s. well

FOR A COMPANY with a rather volatile record, French Connection has been performing remarkably well. The fashion retailer and wholesaler has learnt the lesson of past mistakes when it diversified into areas like Bukta sportswear. It is now concentrating on its two core brands, French Connection and Nicole Farhi.

The French Connection brand has received a huge boost in the past year thanks to the controversial f.c.u.k. advertising campaign which various parts of Middle England tried to ban. The group increased its advertising budget to £1.5m to back it and recouped most of the money through the sale of 100,000 T-shirts sporting the cheeky slogan.

This fed through to strong growth in the UK, where like for like sales increased by 15 per cent and profits doubled to £3.5m. This is a creditable performance on a fragile high street where even the likes of Next have stumbled.

The strong performance of the two brands pushed full year profits up from £6.2m to £8.2m and the shares rose 25p to a new high of 427.5p. They were languishing at around the 150p mark just two years ago.

The first half of the current year will be affected by expansion work at two key London stores but these should make an enhanced contribution in the second half. The group is also expanding significantly this year with a £10m capital expenditure programme which will see a further six shops added this year in locations like Bristol, Glasgow and Leeds as well as six more concessions. A test store has also opened in Canada.

On NatWest Securities' forecasts of £9.5m the shares trade on a forward rating of 14. That is not too demanding but fashion is a volatile business and the shares have had a good run. Hold.

Dixons buys Byte stores

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

DIXONS, the electrical retailer, announced yesterday it had bought the Byte chain of personal computer superstores but said it planned to close 13 of the 16 branches.

Dixons is paying just £100,000 for Byte, which recorded pre-exceptional losses of £1.7m last year. It is keeping three outlets in Chester, Solihull

and Chiswell Street in the City of London, which will all be re-branded under Dixons' PC World name. All the others will close although Dixons said it hoped to offer the staff jobs at its nearby PC World stores.

Dixons is also likely to pull out of the 45 concessions Byte currently operates in Office World, the stationery and office furniture retailer. It is paying £4.9m for the freehold property in Solihull which houses the head office as well as a store.

'Independent' group hits £81m

By Michael Harrison

THE IRISH media group Independent Newspapers, owner of *The Independent* and the *Independent on Sunday*, yesterday reported record profits for last year of Ir£100m (£81.3m) - a 36 per cent increase on 1996.

The improvement was driven by a strong performance in Ireland, where the buoyant economy helped lift underlying profits 18 per cent to Ir£42m, and record profits of Ir£41m from New Zealand, where the group now owns 99 per cent of Wilson & Horton, publisher of the flagship daily, *The New Zealand Herald*.

At the operating level, profits rose by 59 per cent from Ir£67m to Ir£106m on sales up by 43 per cent to Ir£599m.

Dr Tony O'Reilly, Independent Newspapers' chairman, said the current year had begun positively in all markets and the decision to take full control of Wilson & Horton would produce further earnings growth this year.

In the UK, profits grew from Ir£3.4m to Ir£4.9m helped by the purchase of the *Kensington Times* while profits from the group's South African titles,

which include the *Johannesburg Star* and newspapers in Cape Town, Durban and Pretoria, grew 11 per cent to Ir£19.7m. Liam Healey, chief executive, said that circulations of the group's South African titles had begun to rise again, having fallen after the elections, while advertising revenues had been strong in the second half.

He indicated that Independent Newspapers was on the lookout for further titles. "We are an acquisitive company and we will continue to be."

Newspaper Publishing, the publisher of the two *Independent* titles, made a £7m loss last year. Independent Newspapers, which took control of the company last month, has reduced the carrying value of the business to zero to comply with accounting standards which take effect next year.

Brendan Hopkins, chief executive of Independent Newspapers UK, reiterated the group's commitment to invest in the two titles.

Following a revaluation carried out by Hambros, the balance sheet value of the group's newspaper titles has been increased by Ir£210m to Ir£834m. Year-end debt stood at Ir£420m giving a debt-to-equity ratio of 52 per cent.

Filofax sells card business at a loss

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

FILOFAX, the personal organiser maker, has sold its greetings card business for a net loss of more than £6.5m.

Filofax paid £5.4m for Henry Ling & Sons four years ago but has sold it to a private buyer for a maximum cash consideration of £1m.

The deal includes a goodwill write-off of £4.8m.

The news, combined with a trading update warning that the strength of sterling was still affecting trading in the second half, knocked 9.5p off Filofax shares which closed at 187.5p.

The company repeated the announcement it made in February that it was continuing discussions with third parties in relation to various strategic opportunities.

It is thought these could include a bid for the whole group, which at yesterday's share price was valued at £53m.

Filofax said that in spite of the currency impact, sales had grown in all areas apart from Henry Ling, which it said was experiencing a disappointing year.

The company said it expected profits for the year to March to exceed £6m. Previous forecasts were for £6.5m.

These forecasts included an expected contribution from Henry Ling & Sons, which made profits of £188,000 last year and had net assets of £2.4m.

Filofax has been struggling over the last couple of years due to the increasing popularity of electronic organisers and, more recently, the strength of the pound.

The company's shares reached a peak of 275.5p in 1995 but slumped to 121.5p last November after a profits warning.

And suddenly Joe Public,
2.4 kids, Acacia Avenue,
becomes his old self again.



Sharan

هنا من الأهرام

How the bottom line fails to support the goldilocks theory



DIANE COYLE
ON THE MYTH
OF INCREASED
COMPETITION

ONE of the components of today's received wisdom about the economy is that the business environment is more competitive than ever. It has become an even more popular theme in the aftermath of the Asian crisis, with predictions of a "flood" of cheap goods following the devaluation of Asian currencies and collapse of demand in their home markets.

But the notion that competition is fiercer than ever was always one of the building blocks of the "new paradigm" theory that low inflation is now compatible with a higher rate of growth than in previous business cycles. Technological change and improved labour productivity are part of this story, but so too is increased efficiency resulting from globalisation and the consequent increased openness to competition. This is what some economists argue lies behind the shift to a new environment of permanently low inflation.

The new paradigm - also known as the "goldilocks economy" in the US, because growth has blown neither too hot nor too cold - is very enticing. There is almost certainly some truth in it - it is impossible to deny that long-run technological change is altering the way modern economies work. But the fact that this view has become so popular at the point in the US and UK business cycles when growth is passing its peak and a downturn is

likely ought to set alarm bells ringing to the sceptical mind.

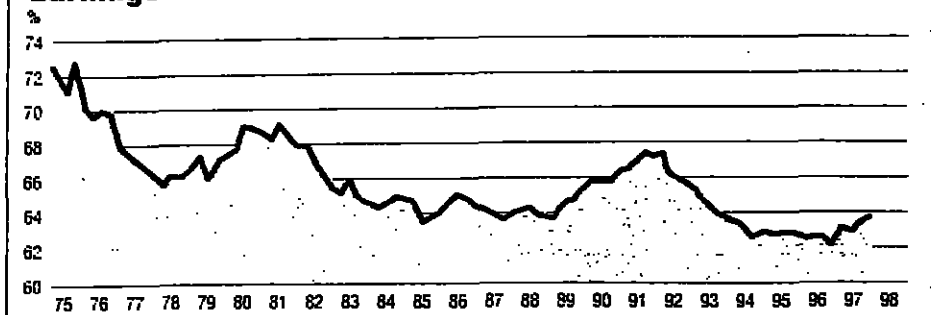
So to probe the issue, start with the question about how you can tell whether competition has increased. If life is tougher for businesses, it ought to be better for consumers. One indicator of that would be prices. Now, inflation is indeed lower around the industrialised world than it was in earlier decades, with consumer price inflation running in the 0.5 to 3.5 per cent range in most OECD countries (with the UK, surprise, surprise, near the top of the range). Inflation rates further back in the supply chain, at the factory gate, are virtually zero. Retailers are eager to report that if they put up prices, shoppers stay away. And lower inflation has translated into healthy increases in real, inflation-adjusted earnings.

Yet this does not count as conclusive evidence. There are other reasons, apart from increased competition, which explain why observed retail price inflation should be low and stay low. The simplest, and most important, is better macroeconomic policy. Governments have learned from experience and now know how to avoid the kind of policy mistakes that allowed inflation to take off in the past.

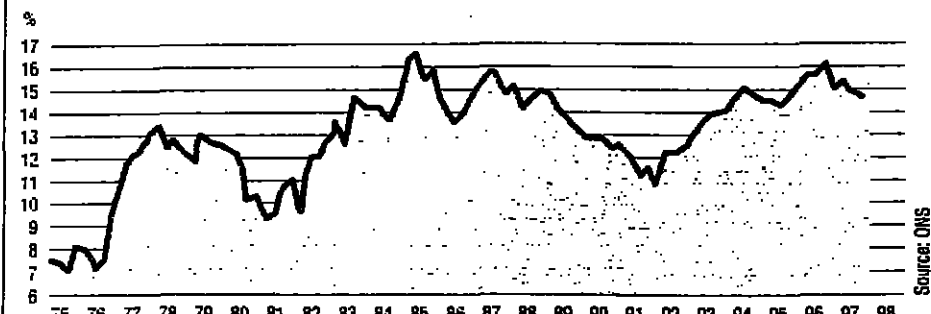
In addition, measured consumer price indices mainly measure the price of goods, and some goods have seen dramatic price falls relative to other goods. Any index which includes computers and consumer electronics but excludes other things such as widely purchased services will be reflecting these relative price declines.

This is not a knock-out blow to the increased competition argument, because inflation measured by GDP deflators, the broadest price indices, has also been low. But it does draw attention to the need to keep separate the general argument from the fact that some markets for particular goods are experiencing dramatic technical change or world oversupply or both. Semiconductors, and hence basic computer hardware, and steel both fall into this category. But looking at prices is a

Earnings share of GDP



Profit share of GDP



badly flawed method of assessing whether or not businesses are experiencing increased competition. The best indicator is the old bottom line, profits.

And that suggests that, actually, companies have never had it so good. For the corporate sector as a whole, the competitive environment is very favourable. In the UK, for example, the profits of the corporate sector as a whole (not just listed companies) rose by 3 per cent in 1997, following a 10 per cent jump in 1996. Most analysts expect them to grow healthily again this year, although the range of forecasts is wide because of uncertainty about how fast the economy will slow.

Last year's profit growth was a shade below GDP growth, so the profit share of national income declined slightly. But, as the graph shows, it remained near its highest level for 30 years. The corollary of this is that the share of earned incomes in the total has declined over time, and is near its lowest for a generation. This rather torpedoes the theory that the

business environment is unusually tough. The same pattern can be observed around the OECD. The return to capital has increased in almost all countries, meaning that this is the best time to be a capitalist since at least 1970.

As brokers ABN Amro point out in their latest quarterly, this fundamental fact is what high stock market valuations have been reflecting. Strategist Gareth Williams still reckons markets are overvalued, with the 20 per cent rise this year down to exuberance - but he shames on anybody who thought the markets were being completely irrational.

The profits figures suggest that the new paradigm is short-hand for the fact that gains in labour productivity have been successfully captured rather than frittered away by policy mistakes. Part of the gain has gone in increased real pay, but most of it has increased the profit share. The competitive environment might well have become tougher for some companies or industries, with a struggle over which

De La Rue plans to restructure banknote business

DE LA RUE, one of world's major manufacturers of currency notes and credit cards, said yesterday it was planning to reorganise its banknote business to improve competitiveness.

De La Rue said it would address a number of issues, including over-capacity and operational efficiency in its review. The company initiated the review last month when it announced a profit warning for the year. The company warned against lower operating profits on 19 February and it triggered a share price slide of around 25 per cent in one day.

It admitted it had suffered from oversupply in its main banknote business and has failed to meet expectations in its other businesses, such as making cash-sorting machines and payment cards. It recently took a stake in an electronic terminals business run by France's Ingenico SA in an effort to improve its exposure in that area.

Yesterday, De La Rue regained ground, closing at 289p, 5p gain, as it said it was going to reorganise its business into four core areas, currency, security products, international and brand production.

De La Rue said James Hus-

say would be managing director of the currency business and would be responsible for managing the banknote and banknote-paper business. Mr Hussey was formerly managing director at Portals Group, the security and specialist papermaker.

Michael Pugh, De La Rue's managing director for security paper and print division, said: "The over-capacity in the banknote market has considerably affected our profitability and one of the first tasks will be for James to determine what further steps need to be taken to tackle this."

The company said in February that its physical security business had performed badly, wiping out nearly £10m from the division's operating profits.

De La Rue was also hit by the economic crises in South-east Asia, which accounted for 10 per cent of its total cash-handling equipment sales. Brandon Gough, De La Rue's chairman, added: "There is no magic formula. While we are the most efficient commercial banknote producer in the world and the most profitable, it was time to take a serious look at that business, to shake it up."

- Agencies

Vickers denies reports of VW offer for Rolls

VICKERS yesterday denied receiving a revised offer for Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, its luxury car unit, from Volkswagen after selecting its German rival BMW as the preferred bidder. Vickers said claims that it had received a revised VW bid and was in talks with the company had "no substance".

The statement contradicted comments on Tuesday evening by Graham Morris, Rolls-Royce's chief executive, who told reporters a new VW offer had been tabled. Vickers said this was wrong and gave what it called the "official" version of events.

Vickers said it had entered four weeks of exclusive talks with BMW, selected as preferred bidder on Monday after tabling a £240m offer for Rolls. "We would like to make clear Vickers entered into a period of exclusive talks with BMW... it is not in discussions with any other party. There have been no other new offers," said a Vickers spokesman.

Vickers said the comments were made in an attempt to clear up possible misunderstandings after the comments made by Mr Morris at a reception in Berlin. Mr Morris' remarks followed a report in the German tabloid *Bild*, which said VW planned to top its £240m (£200m) offer by DM300m.

British Midland profits soar

BRITISH Midland Airways, the country's second-biggest scheduled airline, had its most profitable year ever in 1997, despite increased competition from new low-cost carriers.

The privately owned airline yesterday reported an increase in pre-tax profits to £17.3m from £6.1m in 1996 on sales that rose 10.7 per cent to £530m.

Sir Michael Bishop, chairman, said traffic and loadings were boosted by investment in its premium Diamond EuroClass service and route connection alliances with 17 international carriers at its home base at London Heathrow airport. British Midland also benefi-

ed last year from a strike by cabin crew at British Airways which boosted profits by £3.5m-£4m.

Traffic was up 7.5 per cent at 5.7 million passengers but capacity growth was just 2.3 per cent, which gave a rise in average seat sales to 65.4 per cent of capacity, from 63.2 per cent in 1996.

The airline also announced that it would launch a new route between Heathrow and Warsaw on 10 July, to break the route duopoly of British Airways and the Polish carrier LOT.

Sir Michael said BM had pioneered bringing new competition to Europe's scheduled air markets and he was confident

of taking on the new low-cost airlines, including BA's own venture Go, which announced its first routes today.

But he warned that sooner or later there would be casualties as economic realities took hold, predicting there could be at least one failure within the next 12 months among the newer airlines.

Bishop said the low-cost phenomena in Europe was likely to go the way of the US market when deregulation 20 years ago triggered a proliferation of similar start-up "no frills" airlines, only for most to be gradually killed off.

Go takes off, page 3

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Sterling	1 month	3 month
UK	1000		
Australia	23286	25281	25985
Belgium	21789	21789	21789
Canada	23695	23695	23695
Denmark	15262	15262	15262
ECU	16582	16582	16582
France	93984	93984	93984
Germany	22312	22312	22312
Greece	30979	30979	30979
Hong Kong	54059	54059	54059
Ireland	12342	12342	12342
Italy	13342	13342	13342
Japan	16184	16184	16184
Malaysia	4207	4207	4207
New Zealand	30330	30330	30330
Norway	20800	20800	20800
Portugal	20800	20800	20800
Saudi Arabia	27074	27074	27074
Singapore	27074	27074	27074
South Africa	26280	26280	26280
Spain	16704	16704	16704
Sweden	12342	12342	12342
Switzerland	15262	15262	15262
US	10708	10708	10708

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	16704	10000
Brazil	16704	10000
Canada	16704	10000
Czech Rep	16704	10000
Egypt	16704	10000
Ghana	16704	10000
Hungary	16704	10000
India	16704	10000
Indonesia	16704	10000
Kuwait	16704	10000
Nigeria	16704	10000

Interest Rates

Country	3 month	1 year	2 year	5 year	10 year
UK	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%
France	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%
Germany	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%
Italy	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%
Japan	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%

Bond Yields

Country	3 month	1 year	2 year	5 year	10 year
Australia	4.78%	4.78%	4.78%	4.78%	4.78%
Belgium	4.78%	4.78%	4.78%	4.78%	4.78%
Canada	4.78%	4.78%	4.78%	4.78%	4.78%
Denmark	4.78%	4.78%	4.78%	4.78%	4.78%
ECU	4.78%	4.78%	4.78%	4.78%	4.78%

Money Market Rates

Country	Overnight	1 week	1 month	3 month	6 month	1 year
UK	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%
France	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%
Germany	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%
Italy	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%
Japan	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est floor	Open
Long Call	Jun-98	100.51	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Put	Jun-98	100.51	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Call	Jul-98	100.51	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Put	Jul-98	100.51	100.00	100.00	100.00

Life FTSE 100 Index Option

Series	Call	Put	Call	Put	Call	Put
1000	100.51	100.00	100.51	100.00	100.51	100.00
2000	100.51	100.00	100.51	100.00	100.51	100.00
3000	100.51	100.00	100.51	100.00	100.51	100.00
4000	100.51	100.00	100.51	100.00	100.51	100.00

Commodity Indices

Index	Base date	Index	Base date
Oil	100.00	Oil	100.00
Gold	100.00	Gold	100.00
Silver	100.00	Silver	100.00
Copper	100.00	Copper	100.00

Industrial Metals

Commodity	Cash	3 month	6 month	1 year
Aluminium	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Copper	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Gold	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Iron	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Precious Metals

Commodity	Cash	3 month	6 month	1 year
Platinum	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Palladium	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Silver	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Gold	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Agricultural

Commodity	Cash	3 month	6 month	1 year
Wheat	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Corn	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Soybeans	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Cotton	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Other Softs

Commodity	Cash	3 month	6 month	1 year
Live Cattle	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Live Hogs	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Live Pigs	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Live Sheep	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Fund	Unit Price	Fund	Unit Price
ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00	ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00
ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00	ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00
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ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00	ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00
ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00	ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00

Mobile phone operators see surge in new subscribers

THE GROWTH in the mobile phone market has shown no sign of a slowdown this year, it emerged yesterday after the UK's leading operators published their new subscriber figures.

Vodafone said it added more than twice as many subscribers in its fourth quarter as a year ago as falling call rates made more people buy mobiles.

Vodafone, the US's largest mobile phone operator, added a net 172,000 subscribers in the

three months to 31 March, above expectations and up from the 67,000 new customers added in 1997's first quarter.

The company, which now has 3.43 million UK subscribers, also said it had more than doubled the number of its international subscribers over the last 12 months to 2.41 million.

Mobile phone operators in the UK and elsewhere in Europe have seen subscriber figures surge in recent years as falling call rates and declining

prices for mobile phones have attracted more customers.

Vodafone shares closed 3.5 pence higher at 628.5p.

Rival Celtel, which is 60 per cent owned by British Telecom and 40 per cent by Securicor, said it added a net 88,000 subscribers in the quarter, up from 12,000 in the year-earlier period. Celtel now has 3.08 million subscribers. BT shares rose 21p to 671p, while Securicor shares fell 3.5p to 404.5p.

One-2-One, which is equally

owned by Cable & Wireless and US West International, a unit of US West Media Group, said its subscriber base grew by 184,000 customers in the quarter, compared with 75,000 in the year-earlier period. The company now has 1.2 million customers. Cable & Wireless shares fell 0.5p to 747p.

Orange has yet to release its subscriber figures. The company's shares surged 25.5p to 406p.

— Bloomberg



Brake on growth: Oliver Whitehead (left, with chairman Sir Terence Harrison), warned yesterday McAlpine would be hit by curbs on road building. Photograph: Andrew Burman

McAlpine warning as profits double

By Andrew Verity

ALFRED MCALPINE, the civil engineer and housebuilder, yesterday said the group would be hit by Government curbs on new road building as it announced a doubling of pre-tax profits to £24.1m.

Oliver Whitehead, the group's chief executive, warned its civil engineering business would suffer from falling sales as the Government went ahead with cuts to new road building. He said the group was moving into projects in the water sector, and road and rail maintenance to offset the decline.

Alfred McAlpine doubled

pre-tax profits in 1997 after buying Raine, a rival housebuilder, for £42.6m. McAlpine said the homes division, which has so far missed out on a housing boom in the South-east, was set to benefit as the boom spread.

The company sold 2,674 homes last year against 1,688 in 1996. Its housing arm made an operating profit of £22m.

The company exited the construction market two years ago but still conducts special projects such as building football stadia. It is now close to completing Huddersfield Town football stadium and will this year start building a 25,000-seater stadium at Wigan Football Club.

Shares in McAlpine rose 5p to 176p, valuing the group at £207.7m. Mr Whitehead said he would sell the group's loss-making US businesses "if the right offer came along". Blythe Construction and Becker Minerals, which make up 15 per cent of McAlpine's turnover, have been beaten to big road contracts by rival US companies.

"It's no secret these activities do not form part of the group's long-term plans, but there is no 'for sale' sign hanging over them," Mr Whitehead said.

Profits at the US division fell last year by 22 per cent to £2.85m on sales of £99m.

Investment column, page 24

Forward Technology may get offer

By Kerry Benefield

FORWARD Technology Industries yesterday revealed it had been approached in what may lead to an offer for the embattled company. The market responded immediately, sending Forward Technology's shares up by as much as 11 per cent, their highest level since October last year. The shares closed at 16.75p, a gain of 1.5p.

The company, which makes audio and video cassettes, compact discs, and electronic equipment, has struggled recently, posting a loss in the first half of 1997 of £2.5m, compared with net income of £43,000 in the year-earlier period.

A company spokesman said tomorrow's release of annual figures was likely to show that it was having some difficulties. "We've had a very disappointing second half. Perhaps by Friday we'll have some clarification of the approach."

Forward Technology ran into problems after a disastrous attempt to change the emphasis of its US factory toward the production of more complex equipment for other companies. It took on bonding orders from external firms to escape the pressures of existing markets. In December, after a 31 per cent fall in its market value, it issued its second profits warning in three months.

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

JOHN WILLCOCK



THREE cheers for the Germans, part one: Teutonic industrial behemoth Siemens has appointed the first ever Brit to head up its UK business. Alan Wood is taking over from Jürgen Gehrels as chief executive of Siemens PLC, as the latter heads back to the Fatherland to become non-executive chairman of the holding company.

Mr Wood, previously group managing director of the Industrial and Energy businesses of Siemens PLC, is joined by two other distinguished names. Sir Bob Reid, chairman of Sears, and George Mallinckrodt, President of Schroders, join the board as non-executive directors.

Siemens first founded a UK offshoot 154 years ago, but the company's progress mirrored the relations between the two countries. According to Mr Wood, Siemens had become the biggest electrical engineering company in the UK on the eve of the First World War — at which point it was sequestered by the British government.

Then in the 1920s and 1930s, Siemens built up a second British subsidiary — which was again confiscated on the outbreak of the Second World War.

Somewhat chastened, Siemens dipped its toe back into the UK in the 1960s, but it was only in the mid-1980s that it really began to motor, according to Mr Wood. "Turnover has grown from £100m to over £2bn last year," he says.

Mr Wood reckons appointing a Brit "is not so outrageous when you consider Siemens's stated policy is to staff its operations with local nationals". It helps, of course, that Mr Wood is "fairly fluent" in German, which he did as an O' Level at school in his native Sheffield.

THREE cheers for the Germans, part two: While UBS, NatWest and BZW have been shedding investment bankers like apples in autumn, Commerzbank has decided to hire 300 of the lucky blighters. Yesterday Mehmet Dalman, head of

global equities at Commerzbank, named a score of his latest recruits.

A dozen of them are from UBS, while there is a sprinkling of former BZW and CSFB people as well, not to mention a couple of refugees from Peregrine, the crashed Hong Kong investment bank.

Mr Dalman was himself poached by Commerzbank last summer from Deutsche Morgan Grenfell to build a derivatives and equities operation. He was posted to Frankfurt, to avoid any chance of him "going native" in London, although most of the bank's new operations will be in the Square Mile. Mr Dalman was given SocGen's old, empty offices in Gracechurch Street, and more or less told to fill them.

Commerzbank had previously sniffed around Smith New Court and BZW, but plumped for "piecemeal" growth rather than forking out huge wads of cash for existing investment banks.

As Commerzbank's announcement put it yesterday: "This strategy differs from those of Deutsche Bank and Dresdner Bank, which acquired existing institutions. Commerzbank's strategy is to build its own."

Newcomers from UBS include Lakis Athanasios, head of utilities, who is named number one by both Exel and Institutional Investor, together with his team-mates Paul Rogers and Chris Rogers.

Other UBS refugees include John Atkins (property), Michael Drepper (insurance), Peter Dupont (metals and mining), and Jeremy Eldon (oil and gas). Mr Dalman has also managed to lure Andrew Blair-Smith, former head of autos at BZW, Tim Hirst, ex-head of telecommunications at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, and Ronald Koehler, former head of chemicals at CSFB.

Commerzbank has also assembled three "core analytics and trading teams": Martin Bell, head of derivatives proprietary trading, leads half a dozen people from Barclays Capital; Sunil Goonetilake and Patrick Wong come from Peregrine to trade in Asian derivatives; and Laurie Pinto leads two other colleagues from Mesrirow Europe to form a risk arbitrage sales team.

THE FRENCH are determined not to be left out of the party. Crédit Lyonnais has dropped the "Laing" off the end of its investment banking title, and appointed UK boss Michael Kerr-Dineen head of all European brokerage, in a newly remodelled "CLSE" or Credit Lyonnais Securities Europe.

Other talk in the wine bars of the City suggest that Dutch outfit Rabobank is about to hire another UBS type, John Aitken, the top-rated banks analyst, together with his team. And big noise Hector Sants, who has just defected from UBS to join Wall Street investment bank Donaldson Lufkin and Jenrette, is rumored to be preparing the way for loads more UBS staff to follow him across.

All in all, the City has still got some way to go before it can earn the title "unemployment blackspot".

NEIL Kinnock has never been short of a word or two and last week the European Transport Commissioner was on particularly good form. Mr Kinnock was attending a lunch in Brussels hosted by the European Policy Forum at which Lord Simon, the minister for competitiveness and Europe, was guest speaker. Midway through his peroration Lord Simon switched into fluent French, as is his wont. Whereupon Mr Kinnock was heard to observe: "Le nouveau Labour est arrivé."

TIM Eggar, former energy minister and now chief executive of Monument Oil and Gas, appears to be using his political contacts to good effect.

Monument has won itself friends in Azerbaijan and is hoping to capitalise on those contacts by bringing on board Terry Adams, first president of the Azerbaijan International Oil Consortium in Baku.

Former BP man Mr Adams knows all there is to know about the region, so a joint development project in Azerbaijan is expected to be announced before long.

Mr Eggar is clearly gung ho about the region and he brings a more swashbuckling style to the CEO job compared with Tony Craven Walker, who remains Monument's chairman. But Mr Craven Walker knew what to expect. He and Mr Eggar, a former investment banker, both shared positions on the board of Charterhouse Petroleum in the early 1980s.

Meanwhile, some other old friends. Roy Franklin and Malcolm Gourlay are struggling to put the wheels back on Pittencrieff Resources. They found themselves out of a job last year when Gulf Canada took over Clyde Petroleum. They came into Pittencrieff in September and have cleaned out the stable with a £10.5m writedown of assets.

Despite the consequent £10.8m pre-tax loss, Mr Franklin says he is confident of "doing another Clyde", which they built into a major success story.

The shareholders of Clyde, however, might remember that when Mr Franklin arrived in 1991 the share price was £1.20. It sank to 19.5p as the oil price slumped but later recovered. Gulf Canada paid... yes, you have guessed it, £1.20 a share.

A LONDON Underground project manager has been nominated for a top national award for inventing a system which monitors delays on the Tube.

Graham Stephens has been put up for Project Manager of the Year for his system "for monitoring the 60,000 incidents that each year cause above a more than two-minute delay on the railway".

60,000. It's a wonder anyone in the City ever gets to work at all.

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In today's world baseball's traditional popularity is at serious risk

IN A time before blanket television coverage, player power and salaries to dwarf what some people get for running countries, baseball stood at the centre of American life.

I know about this from books and movies and conversations with people who speak about the game in reverential terms, rather like Burt Lancaster's ageing thief in *Atlantic City* saying: "You should have seen the ocean back then."

For purposes of comparison, before the 1998 baseball season's opening-day ritual this week I read again David Halberstam's book *The Summer Of '49*, which is a vivid account of the 1949 pennant race, in which two legendary rivals, the Boston Red Sox and the New York

Yankees, battled to a winner-take-all final game.

The romance of baseball and what it meant then in the American psyche is made clear by this description: "The fever was in the streets. On Saturday morning the crowd gathered early, not only in Fenway Park to watch the Red Sox and the Yankees in their early work out, but also outside the nearby Kenmore Hotel where the Yankees were known to be staying... When Charles Silvera, a young catcher just brought up from the minor leagues, saw the streets outside the hotel jammed with excited Boston fans, he felt like a Christian on his way to the Coliseum [sic]. It was, thought Silvera, as though nothing in the world matters except this game."

Times change, maybe for the worse, maybe for the better, and they have changed enough to put baseball's traditional popularity at serious risk from what a friend, Pat Putnam, calls "competition for the leisure dollar."

Putnam, a decorated veteran of the Korean war who covered many big events for the American magazine *Sports Illustrated* and makes guest appearances for *The Observer*, coaches junior baseball in retirement. "Baseball remains the American game," he said, "but it has a generational problem. There are so many things kids can take up today and many don't have the attention span for baseball. Up here [Putnam lives near to the city of Albany in the state



KEN JONES

of New York] we lose a lot of them to a thriving soccer programme."

Thus, baseball's Opening Day was seen to be a test of the game's resilience, its traditional loyalties.

Opening Day was celebrated by 49,142 spectators at Shea Stadium where the New York Mets gained a 1-0 victory over the Philadelphia Athletics in the 14th inning.

The visitor finds baseball as difficult to understand as Americans find cricket but its nuances are compelling. As the *Newsday* columnist Steve Jacobson wrote yesterday: "That's the beauty of it [Opening Day] all. Too hokey [corny] for sophisticated New Yorkers, of course, except it's all about today, yesterday and the promise of tomorrow, woven into one piece of cloth."

Despite fears of terminal decline raised by the players' strike two years ago and cynical corporate manoeuvres, like that of the Florida Marlins owner, Wayne Huizenga, who sold off almost his entire team after winning the World Series last

season, baseball is at least holding its ground.

Bunting draped from the railings at Shea included the message: "We skipped school to watch da Mets." Maybe there is a new generation of aficionados out there although by the look of things many in the audience could look back on more years than they find comfortable to remember.

At Shea I fell into conversation with a fan who has not missed Opening Day in more than 50 years. He grew up supporting the Brooklyn Dodgers and wept when they departed for California, something gone from his life with the crash of a wrecking ball into the Dodgers' famous old home, Ebbets Field.

Baseball for him is a passion passed on from father to son, the smell from hot dogs and merciless barracking. "A lot has changed," he said, "too much baseball on television [five of Tuesday's game could be watched live at intervals on various channels], fewer heroes. But I stay with it. Baseball is my game, America's game."

Whelan's Wigan to turn riches into revival

One team threatens to be the superpower in Super League this season. Dave Hadfield on the dangers of Central Park domination

THE THIRD summer of Super League, which kicks off tomorrow night at Huddersfield, could turn out to have more in common with the old winter regime than with its two predecessors.

It is not some obscure side-effect of El Niño we are talking about here, but the potentially chilling impact on their rivals of a revitalised Wigan.

Cynics were heard to remark that the biggest difference in the first two seasons of Super League was that Wigan did not dominate the game in this country. That left the way open for first St Helens and then Bradford to seize the initiative; there is a danger that they and the rest will have the door slammed in their faces this year.

On one level, a Wigan revival is good for the game. Indeed, the managing director of Super League and former chairman of Wigan, Maurice Lindsay, sometimes seems to forget which hat he is wearing and makes Henry Ford-style pronouncements to the effect that what is good for Wigan is good for rugby league.

Well, yes, up to a point. Minister. A strong Wigan and a return of huge crowds to Central Park, before it finally closes its gates, would provide

the game with a major boost. A Wigan side strong enough to scrap it out with, say, Bradford at the top of the table could make it a gripping season.

The trouble is that, on the evidence of the way they dismantled London in the Challenge Cup semi-final last Sunday, Wigan could just be too good. And the last thing this season needs is another one-horse race.

Wigan, with Dave Whelan's money behind them, once more have the strongest squad in the competition. John Monie, whatever his trials and tribulations in Auckland, is the most effective coach the game has ever seen and, although they are having a little local difficulty over their salary cap, it is nothing that more cash cannot fix.

The overdue change to a top five play-off and a Grand Final at the end of the season means that one side running away with the home-and-away section of the competition is not the dampener it would have been under the old system. But other clubs must emerge as genuine contenders over the next few weeks if the campaign is not to settle into a pattern of inevitability.

Who can do that? Well,



Warrior class: Tony Smith displays the power at Wigan's disposal in the recent Challenge Cup semi-final against London

Photograph: Varley/Wilkinson

Bradford have as much raw power as ever, although the early signs are that they seem uncertain why they signed Shaun Edwards. If it is not to call the shots, there is little point in having him there.

There is a premature tendency to write off the London Broncos after their one-dimensional performance against Wigan in the Cup, but they will get a lot better as new players bed in. St Helens will have times when they will look the most accomplished team in the

land and only a starry-eyed optimist would relish playing the Sheffield Eagles in their current mood of absolute self-confidence.

Before the season has even started, Castleford have shown what can be done with clear-sighted coaching and some flair and organisation behind the scenes, while Leeds' potential to be the biggest club in the game is as much of a truism as ever.

In Graham Murray, they have what should prove to be the right coach, but it almost

seems cruel to burden them with too much expectation. There have been too many false dawns for that.

What Super League aspires to is a situation where just about every result is unpredictable, but that requires the weaker sides to lift themselves, week after week. Huddersfield just do not seem to have enough players of Super League calibre, while the turmoil behind the scenes at Hull is the last thing that potentially powerful club needs.

The encouraging aspect is that sides who struggled last season, like Halifax, Warrington and - lest we forget - Castleford, all look to have more ability this time. In theory - and this is backed up by some wonderfully dramatic Cup-ties - there really should be more competitive games.

Those games will be presented with even more razzle by Sky television, although the audiences for the Cup on the BBC are a reminder of the value of terrestrial TV.

Super League is also going around the country in search of a new audience. Like the new finals series, this is an overdue innovation - and one that has happened only because of an embarrassing gap in the season in July - but the prospect of games in Swansea, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Gateshead and Northampton is a welcome one. Television coverage if fine, but there is still no substitute for being there, although some of Wigan's opponents might feel differently by the end of October.

Edwards unhappy at being on bench

By Dave Hadfield

THE Bradford Bulls' big close-season signing, Shaun Edwards, has admitted to being bitterly disappointed to have been left on the substitutes' bench for the Super League season's opener at Huddersfield tomorrow.

"I've been told it's because I missed the game against St Helens," Edwards said yesterday. "But I had a hamstring strain and I wasn't going to risk it in a fixture against Saints. A team I'm braced off, but I've been dropped before."

Edwards' omission from the starting line-up has revived speculation that he could rejoin his original club, Wigan, but their chairman, Mike Nolan, said that there was no possibility of signing him, because they are in breach of their salary cap.

Wigan believe they have secured a new deal with their centre, Gary Connolly, that will keep him at the club until the end of the 1999 season. He would then be 28 when he takes up his contract in Australia, six months later than intended.

Although Wigan are unable to make signings, four clubs had restrictions on them eased at the Rugby League Council meeting yesterday. Warrington, Halifax, Castleford and Salford will also have money that was withheld from their allocation from News Corporation returned to them, although they must still take measures to get within the 50 per cent spending limit.

The London Broncos have been given special exemption to spend 65 per cent of their income on players' wages until they can increase their earnings. It has cost the Rugby League over £100,000, plus legal costs, to settle out of court with the Australian Rugby League over their claim that they were still owed £400,000 from the 1995 World Cup.

"We are just pleased that everything is sorted out," said Ken Atkinson, who headed the Australian delegation to Britain this week. "It was action we took most reluctantly, but it was a matter of principle."

The Council also approved plans to expand the existing Second Division by up to nine new teams. Applications from amateur sides and teams outside the traditional areas have already been invited.

Bob McDermott, the chairman of the First and Second Division Association, said there had already been seven applications. "We need to expand, but we are trying to do it from the bottom rather than from the top," he said. "Someone can have a go at rugby league now without having to throw millions of pounds at it and it could be that there are one or two rugby union clubs interested in moving across."

Super powers of league: Guide to the top division's 12 teams from the Bulls to the Warriors

Bradford Bulls

Coach: Matthew Elliott

Bradford will not again go 20 matches unbeaten - or anything like it in fact, they will have to develop a new dimension to their play if they are to have a chance of retaining their title. But Elliott, a coach who will be well aware of this, has a new dimension to his team in the shape of a new outside back in Kevin Vickers and a new outside back in Kevin Vickers and a new outside back in Kevin Vickers.

Castleford Tigers

Coach: Stuart Raper

Cast caught the imagination with two dramatic wins in the Challenge Cup and they are set to sustain the improvement that they showed after the arrival of Raper midway through last season. There is a new air of confidence around the place and they have recruited well, but they could still be short of depth in some positions and might not be able to claim a place in the top five.

Halifax Blue Sox

Coach: John Pendlebury

Major changes in the playing staff and relocation to The Shay. Some of the signs from the newcomers are good, but there are doubts about the ability of their pack to last the pace in warm weather and on dry pitches. Still, the mood among the players seems better and they will be capable of causing a few upsets.

Huddersfield Giants

Coach: Gary Schofield

Huddersfield have a formidable task this season with a squad only modestly strengthened for their first season in Super League and a coach who, for all his pedigree as a player, is new to the pressures of being in charge. Their one ground for optimism is that there is plenty of size and experience in the forwards, which could make them harder to break down than some opponents might suspect.

Hull Sharks

Coach: Peter Walsh

Had everyone had been pulling in one direction, Hull could have been the "good news" story of the season. It would take only moderate success to bring live television coverage back to The Boulevard, but a thin squad - especially in the forwards - and all the tensions behind the scenes suggest that a tough season is ahead.

Leeds Rhinos

Coach: Graham Murray

There is a key on my computer for this should be the year when Leeds finally live up to expectations but I'm not sure whether to use it this time. Murray is a coach of proven ability, but there are still too many question marks in too many key positions and their early exit from the cup and derby season may argue against them. There is the obvious threat, however, to put together a run of results once they get it right.

London Broncos

Coach: Tony Currie

The Broncos were a terrible disappointment in their Cup semi-final defeat by Wigan, but it is to be expected given their turnover in personnel. They should be successful in the past, but there is real peace in the back, but the link to bring it all together are not yet obvious. Watch out for a surge in the second half of the season.

St Helens

Coach: Shaun Morris

A clear-cut win was needed to boost on the way to Knowlsey Road and they have certainly had it, but how will it settle down? But Southport is a quality question and there is still a wealth of rugby ability spread through the side. Saints will all be very good indeed on their day, but might lose out in the key games against other leading sides.

Salford Reds

Coach: Andy Gregory

Matching last season's major achievement would be a major achievement, especially after the disappointing experience of losing a Challenge Cup semi-final they had in their grasp last weekend. Gregory's men were a bit of a mess, but effective and his players of half-backs at the heart of his side shows his commitment to progressive rugby. But they lack a forward - like John Cartwright last season - to keep the ball alive.

Sheffield Eagles

Coach: John Koor

Year is a coach right on top of his game at the moment and there is an enviable seven of unity and purpose about the Eagles. They believe they can do anything and are capable of building exploits. The leadership of club stalwarts like Paul Broadbent and Mark Aston remains vital and either would be badly missed on their cup exploits.

Warrington Wolves

Coach: Darryl Van de Velde

Vari de Velde's purge of New Zealanders and Polynesians almost amounts to a wholesale cleansing. The introduction of hard-nosed Australians in their place is part of a rebuild that will make them harder to beat, but they still look to lack the quality, and will struggle away from Widdows.

Wigan Warriors

Coach: John Monie

All Monie's professionalism and organisation were visible in the semi-final thrashing of London Broncos and Wigan's squad - judiciously strengthened this winter - is the strongest in the competition once more.

Westwood maintains momentum with Augusta on agenda

Golf

By Andy Farrell
in New Orleans

WHILE many leading players are taking a break between the peaks of the Players' Championship and next week's US Masters, Lee Westwood has chosen to keep riding his present wave of form on to Augusta. Justin Leonard, the winner at Sawgrass on Sunday, immediately withdrew from the Freeport McDermott Classic, however.

With only six of the top 20 players on the US money list in attendance, including Tom Lehman and Davis Love, the European contingent, which includes six of the Ryder Cup team plus Seve Ballesteros, should have high hopes at English Turn.

"I always think that I should be a contender every week now," said Westwood, who has finished 13th and fifth in his last two tournaments. In seven American events over the past year, the 24-year-old has yet to finish lower than 29th. "I have

every chance. You have to be confident going into each tournament."

Unlike those who have remained in Florida, such as Nick Faldo and Colin Montgomerie, one of whom it is certain will be practising hard while the other takes his family to Disney World, Westwood is happy to play tournament golf.

"Playing competitively is the best preparation for next week for me," he said. "I get rusty very quickly when I take a week off. I always come out slowly at the start of

the year, but now I have got a lot of confidence from the last two weeks and I am happy playing my way into Augusta."

Ian Woosnam, who won here in 1991 a month before going on to his Masters victory, is fit to play after quitting during the first round with back trouble last week.

"I have been working on a new motion in my swing and it stretched some muscles that don't usually get used," said the Welshman.

"I feel a bit stiff in the bottom of my back," he added, "but

then if I play darts my arm aches. I couldn't get through the ball with my driver, and if you don't hit the fairways at Sawgrass, it is tough to get round that golf course."

Woosnam was able to practice over the weekend and his coach, Bill Ferguson, reports his iron play and putting are peaking nicely. "I had never lost a putting match to any of my pupils, including Monty, until 'Woosie beat me yesterday,' Ferguson admitted.

For those not already exempt for Augusta, winning here is the

last opportunity to earn a place in the Masters. Love, the current USPGA champion, did just that in 1995 and went on to finish second.

Len Martinec, who has yet to win on the US tour, is one who is still looking for an Augusta invitation. He could have taken care of that last Sunday when he was a shot behind Leonard playing the 17th but twice went in the water and took an eight. "I am going to think about that a lot," he said. "But I'm here to give it another go and get into Augusta."

Geaves faces world champion after second-round surprise

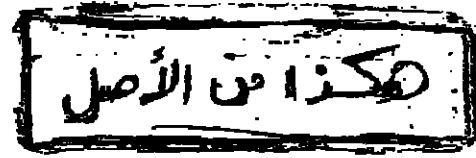
Squash

FIONA GEAVES booked herself a British Open Championships quarter-final against the world champion Sarah Fitz-Gerald after pulling off a second-round surprise in Birmingham yesterday.

The English No 6 and world No 11 defeated the eighth-seeded Liz Irving of Australia, 9-4, 5-9, 9-6, 9-6 in 57 minutes. Fitz-Gerald needed only 24

minutes to remove the England No 8 and world 17, Rebecca Macree of Essex, on the recently finished all-transparent Perspex court, which was still receiving finishing touches yesterday morning.

In the men's event, the 10th seed, Dan Jenson of Australia, came from two games down and two match balls down in the fourth game to defeat the young Canadian Graham Ryding 10-15, 10-15, 15-11, 15-14, 15-2 in 86 minutes.



Blades blowing to final on blast of Fred Eyre

IN normal circumstances, Fred Eyre would no sooner miss the Professional Footballers' Association's annual bash than forego the lifelong ritual of savouring every second of Wembley on a certain Saturday in May.

But, as Eyre explained in his apology to the players' union supremo, Gordon Taylor, he must pass up one due to the fact that he hopes to play an active part in the other. "Dear Gordon," he wrote, "I'm returning the ticket because (and I never thought I'd say this) I'm involved in an FA Cup semi-final that day. Please authorise someone to pick up my merit award."

There is no award, the last line being typical of Eyre's self-mocking wit, although maybe there should be. Now 54 and chief scout to Sheffield United, who contest a final place with Newcastle at Old Trafford on Sunday, his life has been a triumph of perseverance and humour in the face of adversity.

It would take a book to do full justice to the story that has led Eyre to his first semi-final since his days in Raddcliffe Borough reserves' midfield. He has written five, with the tragicomic autobiography *Kicked Into Touch* still in print after 17 years. "It helps," he grinned, "when you print in batches of 10."

The son of a Manchester butcher – no mean pedigree for one now serving the Blades – he was the first-ever apprentice at his beloved City. After the crushing blow of a free transfer and failed attempts to make it at Lincoln, Huddersfield and Crewe, he hawked his indomitable spirit around the likes of New Brighton, Buxton, Chadderton, Ellesmere Port, Rossendale and Oswestry for two decades.

When it was over he had 82 coaches and 30 managers to his name. Oh, and one League appearance, for the doomed Bradford Park Avenue, a club so unstable "the gaffer's office had a turnstile instead of a door".



FA CUP COUNTDOWN

Yet along the way, Eyre built and sold a chain of stationery shops: ran a Rolls-Royce with the number plate SFE 1 ("The S stands for Sir... you've got to think ahead"); hosted the breakfast show on one local radio station then worked as sports editor on another; and became a legend on the after-dinner speaking circuit.

Football remained his passion, however, undiluted by bad coaches ("Keep your high balls low tonight," one urged him) or a frustrating stint as assistant manager to Larry Lloyd at Wigan. The sheer number of his former team-mates ensured he was forever being asked to assess transfer targets or future opponents.

Last year, Eyre was scouting for Sheffield Wednesday when United offered him their senior post. He started the same day as Nigel Spackman, who was to vacate the hot seat dramatically last month, and Steve Thompson, the ex-Bramall Lane Kopite who asked him to share the manager's office with him on taking over.

"The whole thing with Nigel happened over our heads," Eyre explained. "The first I heard – genuinely – was when I was in bed, very early. Tommorang, saying: 'He's resigned.' I said: 'Who?' I thought he meant a sensation, like Alex Ferguson."

"We had no time to dwell on it. There was a match that night and the quarter-final at Coventry looming on the Saturday."

Any divided loyalties? "At my age I only want to work for people I like. If the next man had been appointed at 9am and

Phil Shaw meets Sheffield United's colourful chief scout aiming for Cup revenge over Newcastle after 43 years

I didn't like him, I'd have been gone by quarter past. I'm not getting up at half-six to work 14 hours – Patrick Thistle one night, Birmingham the next and so on – for someone I don't like. I like Nigel but Tommo and myself also get on great."

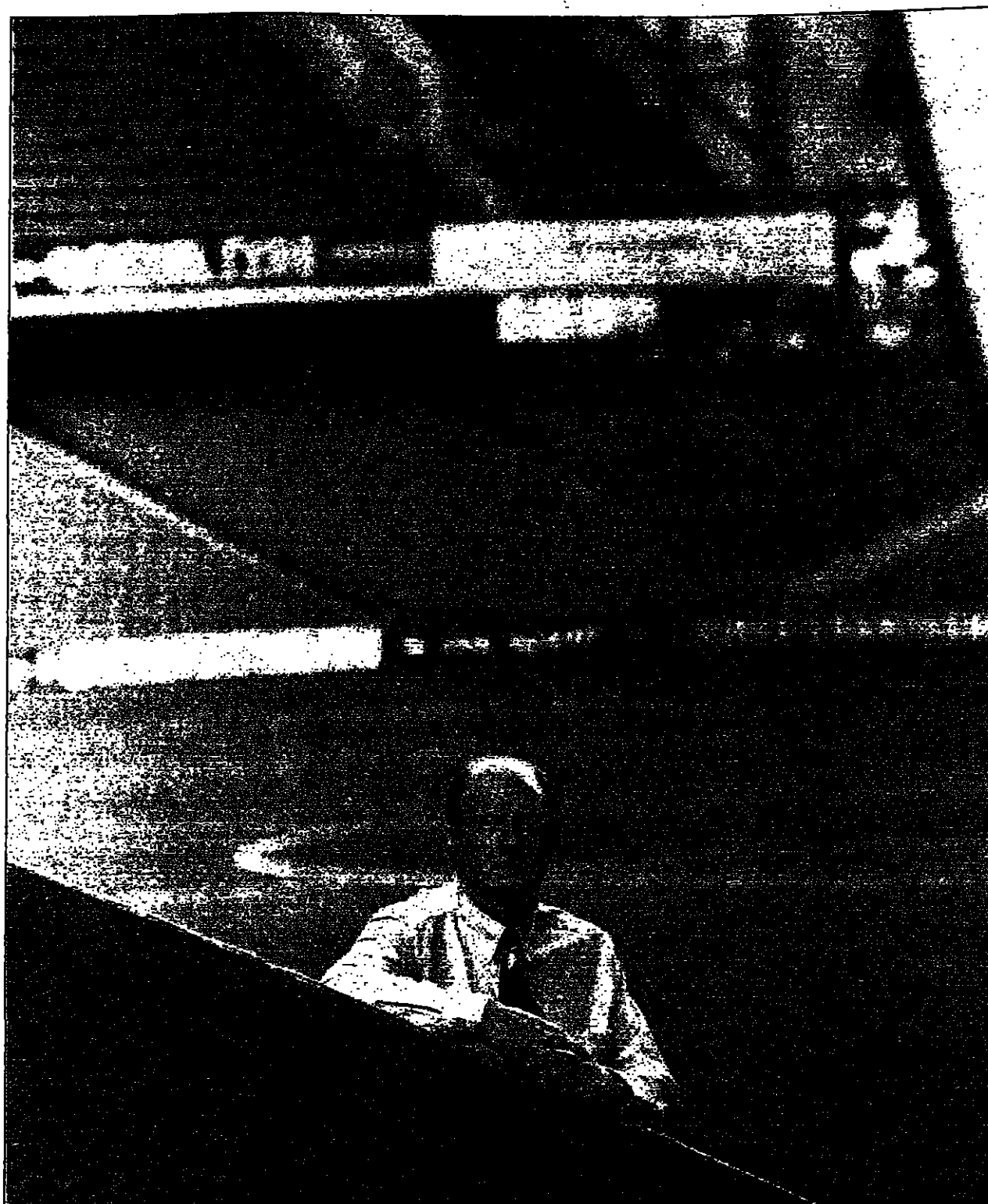
By disposing of Coventry and keeping United's play-off prospects alive, the new regime avoided the self-destructive agonies Newcastle have endured over the loose tongues and morals of two directors.

Eyre and a fellow jester, the striker Dean Saunders, broke the tension before the game at Highfield Road. "We went in and told the lads we'd be doing all Tommo's clichés for him. We went through all the corniest lines managers say, like: 'Give 'em a dig early doors, let 'em know yer there' or: 'It's all about who wants it most'."

"Afterwards, when we'd drawn, we both said spontaneously: 'Remember, it's only half-time.' Everyone was in fits of laughter. The dressing-room has been declared a cliché-free zone. Anyone uttering one has to pay a five into a kitty."

Match of the Day's cameras caught Eyre and Thompson giggling in a fraught moment, and they were delighted that Gordon Strachan belied his grumpy image to join in. After the replay, the losing manager watched the penalty shoot-out on television with the victors.

"I said: 'I fancy us here,' and Gordon saw the joke. When you meet a hero, you don't want to be saying 'I was disappointed with him' when he's gone, but



Fred Eyre: "There's 50 years of my dreams going into this match"

Photograph: Simon Wilkinson

he showed dignity and humour in defeat."

And so to Sunday. As a City loyalist, Eyre would have preferred Maine Road but is not complaining despite having never won at Old Trafford. "When I was captain of City's youth team, United beat us and I got booked, in the days when the nastiest defender could go 500 games without having his name taken."

"I also played for the county boys there and we got slaughtered. More recently I was sponge man for Bury reserves and because United's trainer was already treating someone,

I had the sad duty to attend to the late Jim Holton with the broken leg that finished his career."

Eyre, who watched Kenny Dalglish's side at Wimbledon on Tuesday, is also seeking revenge for the way Newcastle broke his 11-year-old heart in the 1955 final. "I'm still friendly with most of that City side and go for meals with them. That's been my mission in life, to right that wrong!"

"Seriously, though, there's 50 years of my dreams going into this. I wrote off the idea of FA Cup semi-finals when I was released by City. It was all I ever

wanted, so I can hardly sleep for thinking about it."

He is also happy to admit, with no Stevenage-style disrespect to Newcastle, that he has pictured himself beneath the twin towers. The only red thing about this trust of Blues is his hair, "and even that's nearly all gone". Now he could be on the bench at Wembley with a team named United, in the colours City fans normally avoid like the plague.

"I wouldn't be human if I hadn't envisaged it. The final's always been special to me. We used to go out on Boggart Hole Clough [his local park] to act it out as soon as it finished on TV.

I was there after the 1959 final when my dad came to tell me a City scout was at our house to sign me."

"It's a tradition in our house that I get the chocolate caramels and shandies in, draw the curtains and watch from 11 in the morning until the last reveller leaves the stadium."

"So if I'm there with Sheffield United, I'll sit on the front of the bus and wave to everyone, on Wembley Way. And I'll sing 'Abide With Me' louder than anyone. I'm going to do everything." Outside Tyneside, only the meanness of spirits would begrudge him.

Flowers may face summer at home

By Rupert Metcalf

TIM FLOWERS left Ewood Park on Tuesday night with his arm in a sling, fearing that his dream of playing at the World Cup finals may be over.

The Blackburn Rovers and England goalkeeper was substituted during the 2-1 home win over Barnsley, after aggravating a shoulder injury when he fell awkwardly in the penalty as he punched the ball. He was due to have a scan on his left shoulder yesterday, and is fearful that he may need surgery which would jeopardise his place in Glenn Hoddle's squad.

"I couldn't lift my arm above my head and there was no way I could carry on," said Flowers, who added that his last scan in February "showed wear and tear and some arthritis".

John McGinlay has lost his chance of a summer in France. Bradford City's Scottish international striker has been ruled out for the rest of the season with an Achilles problem.

Another forward who may not make the World Cup finals is Colombia's Faustino Asprilla. The former Newcastle man, now back in Italy with Parma, has aggravated a recurring groin injury and has been told to rest for 40 days.

The Scottish Football Association has had some success in securing extra tickets for the World Cup finals. Extra tickets have been given to Scotland for the two first-round fixtures against Morocco and Norway. "That means we have around 2,500 tickets for each of those two matches," David Findlay, an SFA spokesman, said.

England have arranged to play a B international against Russia B at Queen's Park Rangers' Loftus Road stadium on 21 April to give some World Cup fringe candidates a run-out. The senior side meet Portugal at Wembley the following day.

Wolverhampton Wanderers have had a setback in their quest to add the Republic of Ireland striker David Connolly to their squad. The former Watford man, now with Feyenoord, was signed on loan prior to last week's transfer deadline – but his Dutch club are delaying the release of his registration.

Bould blighted by double the nerves

THE Arsenal defender Steve Bould has revealed that the north London team were now beginning to feel the pressure of the championship race after Tuesday's 1-0 victory at Bolton.

Bould admitted that just one error could now cost Arsenal the ultimate prize after Christopher Wreh's 47th-minute strike had closed the gap on the League leaders Manchester United to just three points with Arsenal having two games in hand.

Bould said: "You get a feeling that you're close now and you've got double nerves instead of your usual pre-match nerves. Maybe one mistake and you could blow it all. It's great and it's exciting."

"I don't think you can sit down and analyse and say if we do this – win here or there. It's an old football cliché but you don't read beyond the next game and we've got a big game coming up with the FA Cup semi-final."

Arsène Wenger, the Arsenal manager, gave the winger Marc Overmars less than 50-50 chance of playing in Sunday's Cup game against Wolverhampton Wanderers after the Dutchman limped off at half-time at the Reebok Stadium with an ankle injury.

Nathan Blake, the Bolton striker, praised the Arsenal back four, and the Welsh international believes that communication and organisation will take the Highbury club to their first championship since 1991.

Blake said: "On credentials Arsenal are the best equipped to do it now definitely. They've lost Bergkamp for three games and they still look strong, powerful and everything a championship-winning side should be."

But Blake added that he felt Arsenal had received some official help on Tuesday night to keep their title challenge up. He criticised the referee, Keith Burge from Tonypandy, for not awarding a penalty instead of a free-kick in the incident which saw Martin Keown dismissed in the 64th minute when he fouled Blake on the edge of the area.

"The ref bottled it basically. Ninety per cent of the stadium could see it was a penalty and he can't. He said to Thommo [Alan Thompson] that he was going to ask the linesman."

"What does that say? I'd say he's passing the buck. He was quick enough to give free-kicks when we were fouling them," Blake said.

Hristov the struggling striker still in favour

THE BARNSELY manager, Danny Wilson, has no doubts that his striker Georgi Hristov will eventually deliver the goods. The Macedonian international has endured a difficult first season in the Premiership since arriving from Partizan Belgrade last summer.

Much was expected of Barnsley's record £1.5m signing, who first sprang to prominence when scoring the winner against the Republic of Ireland in a World Cup qualifying match a year ago. So far, Hristov has failed to live up to those expectations and has scored only four goals as team put up a brave fight for survival.

He has not been able to hold down a regular place in the Barnsley attack and did little to boost his popularity when criticising the club and town in an interview given in his homeland.

In a 2-1 defeat against Blackburn Rovers on Tuesday that left Barnsley third from bottom, Hristov demonstrated just how infuriating he can be as he wasted a glorious chance in the opening minutes then squandered further opportunities before finishing with great aplomb for Barnsley's equaliser.

Wilson admits Hristov has not scored as many goals as he

would have liked, but still has faith in him. He feels he has had problems adjusting to his new life and believes he will eventually prosper.

"We had a clear-cut chance early on against Blackburn with Georgi but he miscontrolled it," Wilson said. "But I feel Georgi's always capable of scoring goals. Obviously he's not got the ratio of goals we'd like at this stage of the season. But people keep forgetting he's 22 years old, he's in a foreign country and has a lot of settling in to do."

"I'll be very patient with him as I think he could be a big asset for us in the next year or two if he can fulfil the potential we feel he has." In a reference to Barnsley's plight in the bottom three, Wilson added: "Unfortunately in the Premiership, you don't have time to wait."

The Aston Villa striker Stan Collymore is set to be out of action for a further three weeks after having a cortisone injection to try and cure his groin problem. The Villa manager, John Gregory, admitted that the most "realistic" comeback date would be the home Premiership game against Bolton on 25 April. "The specialist has said that Stan can't do anything for 10 days," Gregory said.

Second cash crisis for unlucky Moss

DAVID MOSS, a part-time insurance broker, did not believe he was taking out a high-risk policy when he swapped crisis club Partick Thistle for Falkirk.

The 29-year-old journeyman was leaving the financially stricken Firhill club for a side who had just savoured their first Scottish Cup final in 40 years and looked a good bet for promotion to the Premier League.

So the Yorkshire-born striker was in a state of disbelief two weeks ago when he heard this year's semi-finalists were also in danger of closure after calling in the liquidator with debts of £1.5m.

"I was down south when I heard things had gone wrong because I was suspended at the time," he said. "I found it hard to take in. For it to happen again to me in such a short space of time was just unbelievable."

"It was a total shock to find out my wages had been cut by 50 per cent. After leaving Partick Thistle and getting the chance to play for Falkirk, I couldn't believe it would happen again."

While Falkirk's long-term future is still uncertain with no new buyer visible as yet, the Brockville outfit are preparing

for Saturday's semi-final match with Hearts in much-improved spirits.

The "Back the Bains" campaign has so far raised over £25,000 to pay the players, ensuring that on-field matters are once again their chief focus for the time being.

"It wasn't a nice feeling to have to go home and tell your wife, and then have to keep phoning up to see if your money is in the bank," Moss added.

"But we've been told that the full, outstanding amount of our wages will be paid in today, so that's put a few minds at rest."

"There was already a superb team spirit at Falkirk before but this has brought us even closer together and certainly helped team morale before Saturday."

Moss's double strike in the 3-0 quarter-final win over St Johnstone – two of 15 he has notched this season – may have put Falkirk on the road to another possible final day out.

But after a career that has taken him from home-town club Doncaster to Scunthorpe via Chesterfield and on to Partick and now Falkirk, Moss striker is relishing his chance in the big-time.

Italians on course for Uefa Cup final clash

ANOTHER all-Italian Uefa Cup final has moved one step closer after Internazionale and Lazio won their respective first-legs of the semi-finals on Tuesday.

The Brazilian midfielder Ze Elias scored a dramatic late winner for Inter as they won 2-1 at home to Spartak Moscow, while Lazio won 1-0 at Atletico Madrid – conquerors of Leicester and Aston Villa in earlier rounds.

Inter, who lost last season's final on penalties to the German club Schalke 04, dominated their tie from start to finish. Ivan Zamorano gave them a first-half lead, but the Spartak captain, Dmitri Alenichev, prodded home a vital away goal after 48 minutes.

However, the Italians piled on the pressure and were rewarded in the last minute when Ze Elias, who had already set up Zamorano's goal, fired home following a goalmouth mêlée.

Lazio produced the perfect example of how to play away from home in a European tie when they shut out Atletico in Spain. Their Yugoslav international midfielder, Vladimir Jugovic, fired home the only goal of the game in the 34th minute as the Rome club extended their unbeaten record to 24

matches stretching back to last November.

Jugovic struck from just outside the penalty area after neat approach play from Croatian Alen Boksic, who along with the captain, Diego Fuser, ran the Atletico defence ragged.

Jesus Gil, president of the Spanish club, watched the game and defied a Uefa ban that should have kept him out of the stadium.

VfB Stuttgart, worried by a league defeat and rumours over the future of their coach, Joachim Loew, can at least welcome back a key trio for tonight's European Cup-Winners' Cup semi-final first-leg at home to Lokomotiv Moscow.

The playmaker Krasimir Balakov and the strikers Fredi Bobic and Jonathan Alkporobie, who were all missing through injury when the German Cup winners slumped to a 3-0 defeat away to Hertha Berlin in the Bundesliga on Saturday, are fit again.

Lokomotiv Moscow, competing in a European semi-final for the first time, have a secret weapon – an intimate knowledge of VfB Stuttgart that the Russian club's staff have built up over years of spending their winter close season at a training camp just outside the German city.

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Head down and forward the only way for Wallace

Twickenham holds no fear for the Irish prop who fired the Lions. Tom Power reports

QUIETLY and without fuss, Paul Wallace goes about his business. A Five Nations game against Wales one Saturday, an Allied Dunbar Premiership summit meeting in Newcastle the following Wednesday, a Telford's Bitter Cup semi-final at Northampton the next Saturday and now an international against England at Twickenham a week later. You could get tired just thinking about it. Yet in his own singularly determined unobtrusive way, Paul Wallace has been an enduring stalwart for the Lions. Ireland and Saracens since last summer - hardly missing a game or letting his form drop in a season when so many mentally and physically jaded Lions have suffered burn-out.

"I think I've been able to raise it for the big games well enough. I've been playing through a lot of injuries, and there's no real cover for me at Saracens so I've had to play with a lot of injury. It's quite difficult playing through that but it's a professional game, and you've just got to battle through it," he said, in typically phlegmatic Wallace mode.

It runs in the family and when the name Paul Wallace crops up it generally does so in unison with either his international brother and Saracens team-mate, Richard, or his Irish tight-head rival Peter Clohesy.

It was due to Clohesy's unavailability that Wallace was first called into the Irish squad for the 1995 World Cup. It was due to Clohesy's infamous



Ireland's Paul Wallace shows the power that has made him a prop to be feared

Photograph: Allsport

stamping on Olivier Roumat's head in February 1996 that Wallace returned to the international side - since when he has been first choice - and it was due to Clohesy's back injury that he was added to the Lions squad as a late call-up last summer.

Lucky breaks don't come any luckier. At the time Wallace was with the doomed Irish development squad in Limerick prior to their trip to New Zealand and a rash of heavy defeats. "In fact, I met Peter at Heathrow. He was on his way home, very disappointed, and I was on my way to join the Lions. It appears as if Peter's career and mine are constantly interwoven."

It is no surprise that this is also true with his brother, Richard. When Paul made his debut against Japan in the 1995 World Cup, they became the first pair of brothers to play for Ireland since Mick and Tom Doyle against Wales in 1968. Then 23, he had served his time by playing for Ireland at every level - schools, universities, under-21, development and A. The last step was the biggest. "Establishing myself was quite easy but getting into the Irish side was quite difficult. In Ireland as opposed to some other countries they don't bleed players too early. So you really have to do your penance."

Having an elder brother making the international grade can be a stimulus in several ways. "Once Richie got on the Irish team it was always

well in those first three games. They're very much power, rather than technique-based and that was not going to be as effective against the South Africans. And I also felt I was as good if not better than them, so I had great confidence in myself. Basically I just had to wait for my chance. When I did, things went well."

So well, indeed, that by the end of the series it was the South Africans who were changing their front row, while the famed Os Du Randt must have been heartily sick of the reverent Irishman. Du Randt, Christian Calmano, Craig Dowd, who has played them all, prompting the query as to who was the best. "I've been asked that a lot of times, those three are very good. I couldn't single out one."

From near the end of that Lions tour Wallace's scrummaging technique came in for lengthy inspection and analysis, to the point where Wallace almost became paranoid about it. He had good reason too, after penalties against him first prevented Ireland from putting Scotland away at Lansdowne Road, and then cost Ireland the match. "An English referee, who watched the series from Argentina, actually told me 'we saw your hand on the ground and you're not going to get away with that this season'. Referee's seem to be picking on me because there's been so much hype about it. But you look at Olo Brown and he scrummages with his hand on the ground every scrum he plays in."

For all that, Wallace has survived the inquisition and the demands of the season with his reputation intact. Playing alongside and against all of the English side for the past two years should, reckons Wallace, be a help more than a hindrance at Twickenham. None the less, unlike his brother, but akin to 10 other members of this Irish side, Paul Wallace was not around to sample the stunning views of 1993 and '94.

Furthermore, although Wallace and the Irish squad travelled by air to London today the air book suggests they may as well have gone on a wing and a prayer. "If we put a performance like we did against France, I think it will be a very tight game and we could take it."

Wales at full strength for French test

By Chris Hewett

WALE will go into Sunday's desperately difficult Five Nations final against the Grand Slam-chasing French in buoyant mood, thanks to a largely error-free week of preparation on the practice pitch. The news should cause some alarm among the 50,000 red-scarved boys currently planning their latest mass migration to Wembley, for the last time the Welsh congratulated themselves on a perfectly executed training programme, they promptly conceded 60 points to England.

All the same, Kevin Bowring was positively upbeat as his side completed their final full-on session at Sophia Gardens yesterday. "We're perfectly aware that we'll need to go up at least two levels to hold the French, but we've regained some confidence after coming from behind to beat both Scotland and Ireland and I think we're ready to reproduce some of the handling rugby we achieved before Christmas."

Had yesterday's prolonged bout of physiotherapy failed to achieve the desired effect, the Welsh would have struggled to field a back division capable of handling the Sevens Bridge toll system, let alone a high-class French outfit within touching distance of that rarest of achievements: the back-to-back Slam. As it turned out, though, three influential performers - Neil Jenkins, Kevin Morgan and the captain, Rob Howley - all declared themselves ready, willing and able.

So too did David Young, the 1989 Lions prop whose success in drawing the string of the brilliant Christian Calmano will be fundamental to Welsh survival chances this weekend. It is also 99 per cent certain that Allan Bateman, the finest all-round centre in Europe, will turn out,

although he again missed training because of a family illness.

Howley, who turned an ankle during a club game last weekend but played a full part in yesterday's bump and grind, was making no bold predictions. "Although he drew sustenance from Ireland's extraordinarily passionate challenge in Paris almost four weeks ago. "They disrupted the French at the set-piece, got amongst them in the loose and generally messed them about," he said. "But we have to take the French approach into account, because they seemed to think they had only to turn up to win the game."

"It's all about their attitude on the day and if they're tuned in, they have enough flair to beat anyone in the world. We have to assume that they will be right mentally and therefore concentrate our efforts on denying them the forward platform they require to release players of the quality of Carboneau, Castaigne and Lemaire. It's the ultimate challenge for our pack, especially our tight five, but at the same time, I'm sure it's a challenge they're dying to meet."

Bowring has worked overtime on the mysterious arts of scrummaging this week, along with improving his team's one-on-one defence. "We've taken the scrummage apart and rebuilt it piece by piece over the last two years and I think we're making tangible progress in that department," he said. "As for our defensive drills, we've invested in the rugby league experience of Clive Griffiths once again. He brings discipline and attitude to what we do and I think you'll see some offensive tackling from us on Sunday."

Meanwhile, the French continued their unenvyingly quiet build-up across the Channel yesterday, showing their heads above the parapet only to confirm that they would be unchanged from the Ireland game.

Crutchley left out of England's World Cup squad

CRUTCHLEY, the striker who has been named National League Player of the Year for the past three seasons, has been omitted from the England World Cup squad announced yesterday.

Crutchley, in spite of being plagued by injuries this season, has scored 41 League goals but

has not been able to satisfy the coach, Barry Dancer, over his fitness for a demanding event of seven games in 12 days. Crutchley's dedication to Cannock, for whom he has played when not fully fit, has probably cost him a World Cup place.

There have been surprising recalls for Duncan Woods and Jimmy Wallis who have benefited from Dancer's desire to give younger players the opportunity to develop.

Cannock's Chris Mayer and Kalbir Fakher are two senior players who have missed out. Both members of the Great Britain Atlanta squad would have felt confident of selection.

Calum Giles, the specialist penalty corner striker, has been recalled but, with the forthcoming rule change of no substitutions after the award of a penalty corner, Giles' international career is likely to end after 1 July. Giles, considered by the coach to

be a world class performer in his specialist role, is much needed after England's poor conversion rate recently in Ipho.

Following doubts about the fitness of second-choice goalkeeper David Luckies, Jimi Lewis has been named as an alternative, the final decision coming at the end of the training camp on 27 April. The side looks well-balanced with five having played in the Sydney World Cup four years ago.

Rusedski and Henman head high-quality field at Queen's Club

Tennis

GREG RUSEDSKI and Tim Henman will be part of a top-class line-up at this year's Stella Artois Championship at Queen's Club. Britain's top two players will be joined by the US Open champion, Patrick Rafter, Sweden's Jonas Bjorkman, and the Croatian Goran Ivanisevic at the pre-Wimbledon tournament.

The holder of the title, Australia's Mark Philippoussis, will defend his title at the event between 8 and 14 June, while Pete Sampras, the world No 1, has asked for one of five wild-card places to be reserved for him. The winner will receive £51,500.

Australia's Davis Cup captain, John Newcombe, yesterday rejected Philippoussis' demand for an apology and told the big-serving 21-year-old to "grow up". Philippoussis had said he would not play in the Davis Cup again

until Newcombe admitted that he and the coach, Tony Roche, had refused his pleas for help when he was struggling for form while his father had cancer last year.

Known as "Scud" but nicknamed "Sillippoussis" by the Australian press yesterday, Philippoussis said he felt bitterly let down and almost quit the game as a result. He demanded a public apology which Newcombe said he would not give.

"You can only apologise if

you've something to apologise for," he said. "I'm not interested in getting into a verbal war of words with Mark. We've a Davis Cup match to win. If Mark feels like that, I'm sorry for him, but we've things happening here. You don't become a winner by dwelling on negatives."

Australia meet Zimbabwe in a World Group first round home tie at Mildura starting tomorrow.

Sporting Digest

Tendulkar the bowler too hot for Australia

Cricket

SACHIN TENDULKAR had a good day in the unusual role of match-winning bowler as India beat Australia by 41 runs in the opening game of the Pepsi triangular one-day tournament in Cochín yesterday.

Tendulkar's occasional spin bowling broke the back of Australia's innings after the opener Adam Gilchrist and Mark Waugh blasted 101 off 11.2 overs in 50 overs. Australia, having reached 202 for 3 in the 2nd over, lost their last seven wickets for 46 and were all out for 208 in 45.5 overs.

Bowling his 10-over spell

unchanged, Tendulkar took 5 for 32, his first five-wicket haul in a one-day game, and won him the man of the match award. He got the ball to lift and turn as he bowled a mix of off-breaks, leg-breaks and simply slow deliveries on a pitch that favoured the batsmen.

After Australia's flying start, Michael Bevan was the only batsman to make an impact with 65 before becoming Tendulkar's third victim, stumped by Nayan Mongia as he missed a drive.

Steve Waugh was caught and bowled by Tendulkar for 26 as he came out to drive a ball pitching on leg stump and turning in. Darren Lehmann was

lbow to Tendulkar as he tried to glance a slow in-cutter. Tom Moody was stumped attempting a huge heave off a Tendulkar leg-break, after hitting the leg-spinner Anil Kumble for three fours in a single over.

India's innings, reduced to 19 for 2 after Mike Kasproutchik removed Navjot Sidhu and Tendulkar, was revived by Azharuddin, making his world record 274th one-day international appearance to beat Allan Border's tally of 273, stroked 82 off 92 balls, hitting 10 fours. The home captain put on 104 for the fourth wicket with Jadeja, who hit an unbeaten 105.

Baseball

AMERICAN LEAGUE: Chicago White Sox 8, Toronto 2; Kansas City 4, Baltimore 1; Detroit 7, Tampa Bay 2; Cleveland 10, Seattle 1; St. Louis 10, Philadelphia 7; Pittsburgh 7, San Diego 1; Cincinnati 2, Atlanta 1; Milwaukee 10, Houston 1; Boston 4, New York Yankees 1.

National League

St. Louis 10, Philadelphia 7; Pittsburgh 7, San Diego 1; Cincinnati 2, Atlanta 1; Milwaukee 10, Houston 1; Boston 4, New York Yankees 1.

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Resort	Comments	Area	Last	Low	High	Forecast
ANDORRA	Spring 5-10 snow conditions	100%	100%	80	130	Part cloudy
AUSTRIA	Good powder top level	75%	310%	0	105	Mostly sunny
CANADA	Firm packed conditions	95%	200%	18	180	Cloudy/rain
FRANCE	Best snow at altitude	90%	240%	40	240	Cloudy periods
ITALY	Good spring snow on top	90%	210%	30	160	Unsettled
NORWAY	Firm packed snow	90%	180%	50	50	Part cloudy
SPAIN	Heavy wet below mid-season	80%	320%	30	100	Light snowfall
SWITZERLAND	Good snow on upper parts	95%	240%	20	110	Cloudy/rain
UNITED STATES	Firm packed snow conditions	100%	100%	220	220	Partly cloudy

As to 08%, numbers east 50p/min to 0990 numbers 1/min at all times. Helpline 0990 133 345

Football results

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLY (Seoul): South Korea 2, Lee Sang-yun 40; Hwang Sun-ho 79; Japan 1 (Kobayashi 69).

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP 1st Round: Scotland 2, Hungary 1; Scotland 2, Hungary 1; Scotland 2, Hungary 1.

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP 2nd Round: Scotland 2, Hungary 1; Scotland 2, Hungary 1; Scotland 2, Hungary 1.

Football results

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EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP 2nd Round: Scotland 2, Hungary 1; Scotland 2, Hungary 1; Scotland 2, Hungary 1.

TODAY'S NUMBER

13,000

The number of Real Madrid football fans who had been hoping to travel to the Spanish Cup final against Barcelona in Valencia on 28 April on board ships of the US Sixth Fleet.

The plan, hatched by Barcelona's president, Josep Lluís Núñez, and a club director, has been dropped because US Navy vessels are not allowed to carry civilians.

Today's Sports

Football: 1st Round: Scotland 2, Hungary 1; Scotland 2, Hungary 1; Scotland 2, Hungary 1.

Baseball: St. Louis 10, Philadelphia 7; Pittsburgh 7, San Diego 1; Cincinnati 2, Atlanta 1; Milwaukee 10, Houston 1; Boston 4, New York Yankees 1.

Cricket: Sachin Tendulkar 5 for 32; India 19 for 2, Australia 208 in 45.5 overs.

Second one-day international: Opener's brilliant form continues in difficult conditions before total is bolstered by late-order surge

Knight in shining form for England

By Derek Pringle
in Bridgetown

England 266
v West Indies

TWO contrasting, but equally important innings, one by Nick Knight, the other from Mark Ealham, helped England to a competitive total of 266 in the second one-day international here yesterday, after the West Indies had put England in to bat on a damp pitch. In reply, the home side raced to 83 off just 10 overs, a storming start tempered only by the loss of three wickets, including that of their captain, Brian Lara.

In difficult early conditions—prolonged rain from the previous day had made the pitch sweat profusely under the covers—Knight's measured knock of 90 from 107 balls was in sharp contrast to Ealham's whirlwind 45, which came off just 37 balls towards the end of the innings when the pitch had eased. Indeed, England added 87 runs from the final eight overs as the West Indies bowlers, their early ascendancy a distant memory, were thrashed to all parts of the ground.

The belated mayhem was in stark contrast to the scene earlier in the day when, with the ball gripping and seaming off the damp surface, the first 15 overs in particular, were a torrid experience for the batsmen. The free-flowing strokeplay, such a feature of the previous match was forced underground, a cloak of caution thrown over it.

Lara also opened with Ambrose instead of Franklin Rose, the tall Antiguan's metronomic dread forcing the openers to fence and forage for their runs

instead of plundering as they had done on Sunday. The contrast was marked and the first boundary did not arrive until the seventh over. Predictably, it was off a thick outside edge, which is more or less how Stewart was dismissed when he sliced Walsh to cover in the 10th over.

In some ways it was surprising the damage was not greater. Even so, the situation of 21 for 1 that welcomed Ben Hollioake to the crease for his second one-day international innings was hardly auspicious.

As ever the youngster looked unfazed, his confidence helped no doubt by Knight's controlled pull for six off Walsh. Moments later, Hollioake was emulating the stroke off Ambrose, although this time for four.

Last year, when he burst on to the scene as a precocious teenager, there was a feeling that Hollioake although undoubtedly talented, was more than a little naïve. This winter's forays to Kenya and Sri Lanka appear to have hardened him mentally. He still makes batting, even against Ambrose and Walsh, look like a Sunday stroll and he had eased his way to 16 from 15 balls when Rose, bowling from the Pickwick Pavilion end, brought off a fine one-handed catch to dismiss him.

But if the score was modest,

the stand of 50 with Knight had injected crucial momentum into the England innings, something it soon lost when Graeme Hick, a statue of tension next to Hollioake's languidity, was bowled by the leg-spinner, Rawl Lewis, for a duck. It was an unfortunate dismissal, the ball squeezing through both pads as Hick, normally a fine player of spin, tried to turn the ball to leg.

By now the sun had come out and dried the pitch substantially, which was behaving less skittishly than it had first thing when it was under heavy cloud. Even so England found themselves forced to retrench, something that Mark Ramprakash, playing in place of the injured Graham Thorpe—who has since flown home because of a recurring disc problem in his back—has become something of an expert at.

Ramprakash last played in a one-day international in South Africa two years ago, i.e. before the last World Cup when Sri Lanka showed everyone how much the game has moved on.

But if Ramprakash began slowly, the rate perked up once he had got his eye in, however, and the Middlesex captain hit Lewis for a mighty six over mid-wicket. Unfortunately for England, an attempted repeat of the shot a few balls later, ended in

Ambrose's hands at deep square leg.

Not long after, England again stuttered when Knight, leg before to Phil Simmons and Adam Hollioake, unluckily run out backing up, went in quick succession.

Fortunately, England's depth of batting was such that the final charge was not compromised. In fact, led by Ealham, it provided some of the most exhilarating strokeplay of the day. One over from Rose, which included two fours and a six, was hit for 17 runs, as England made up for their enforced caution earlier in the day.

Inevitably, batting like that carries a high risk tariff and is often hard to sustain. On this occasion, it was as if the lower order were a tag team and when Ealham eventually perished to a top-edged sweep, Matthew Fleming, as he often does for Kent, managed to sustain the rate with a quickfire 28, until Ambrose interjected, with two late wickets.

Tendulkar's day, page 31

SCOREBOARD

West Indies won toss	
ENGLAND	
N V Knight lbw b Simmons	90
M A Ealham c Lara b Walsh	45
B C Hollioake c & b Rose	16
G A Hick b Lewis	0
M R Ramprakash c Ambrose b Lewis	29
A J Hollioake run out	11
M A Ealham c Ambrose b Simmons	40
D R Brown b Simmons	21
M V Fleming c Williams b Ambrose	28
R D B Croft not out	11
D W Henderson b Ambrose	0
Extras (b2, w3, nb1)	12
Total (98 overs)	266
Fall: 1-21, 2-71, 3-72, 4-131, 5-154, 6-158, 7-206, 8-238, 9-257	
Bowling: Ambrose 10-4-44-2; Walsh 10-1-51-1; Rose 8-0-53-1; Lewis 10-4-42-2; Simmons 8-0-48-3; Hooper 4-0-33-1	
WEST INDIES	
C B Lambert run out	22
P A Wallace c A J Hollioake b Brown	25
B C Lara c Ramprakash b Henderson	26
S C Williams not out	1
C L Hooper not out	4
Extras (b2, w1, nb2)	5
Total (87 overs)	83
Fall: 1-41, 2-64, 3-79	
To bat: P V Simmons, R D Jacobs, F A Rose, C E L Ambrose, G A Walsh, R N Lewis	
Umpires: B Morgan and E Nichols	



Nick Knight, England's opening batsman, hooks during his innings of 90 yesterday

Photograph: Ross Setford/Emphas

Bad back forces Thorpe home

GRAHAM THORPE returned home from England's tour of the West Indies on Tuesday night with a back injury. Thorpe has been troubled by the injury since the Barbados Test match.

"It is disappointing to end

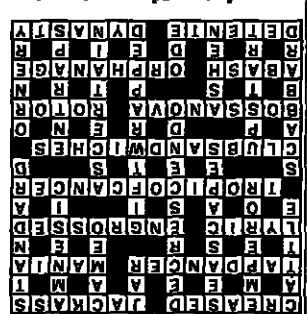
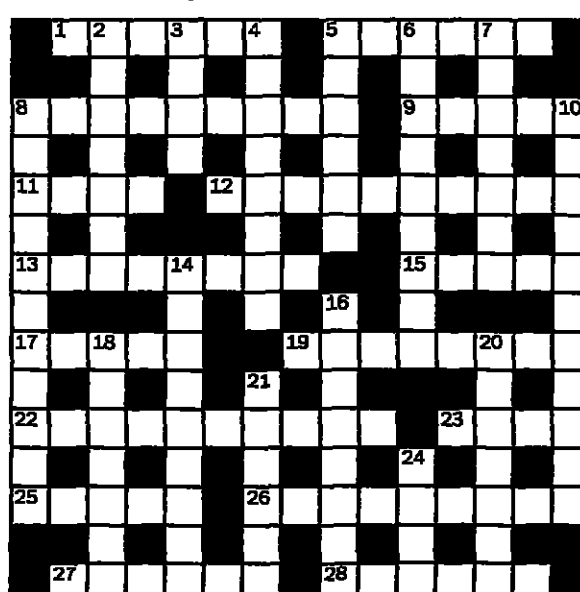
the tour in this way, but I am confident I can play a full part in England's programme next summer," Thorpe said. Thorpe is expected to recover in time to begin the County Championship season with Surrey.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3574, Thursday 2 April

By Phil

Solution to the puzzle on p.20



Due to a production error, Tuesday's crossword was printed again on Wednesday. We apologise for the huge annoyance this caused. Tuesday's answers and the puzzle which should have appeared on Wednesday are printed above.

- ACROSS**
- Very rare public alarm about Conservative (6)
 - 40% of seeds identical from this plant (6)
 - Protection for book listing cricketing terms (4-5)
 - Who's my opponent? (5)
 - Lucky shot disposing of Sir Iman (4)
 - Copper coins needed for this foodstuff (5,5)
 - Contemporary hides sex-appeal, turning shy (8)
 - One pleasant, not cold, girl (5)
 - Wolves may be versed in lechery, mostly (5)
 - Hounds are almost running wild in the country (8)
 - A phone-box I wrecked, being wary of foreign con-

- DOWN**
- Insect associated with the bat? (7)
 - A sweet surprise (4)
 - Nearly feel jealousy for clubs in the surrounding area (8)
 - Odds on inexperienced learner being made to fall flat (6)
 - Players climb on some furniture (9)
 - Mark uncommonly vernal position of spring? (7)
 - Part of body most likely to get tanned? (5,6)
 - Blockage in organ - horrible din in crucial component (6-5)
 - Modern way of getting ready? (4,5)
 - Bone in tumulus giving indication of mortality (8)
 - It may carry a couple of notes in support (7)
 - I'm bard you finally translated? (7)
 - Transport study extremely lacking in rigour, initially (6)
 - Smart, charismatic, but heartless (4)

Chelsea armed with local knowledge

Football

By Glenn Moore
reports from Vicenza

THERE were no garlands, no weeping girls, not even a local mayor greeted Gianluca Vialli and Roberto Di Matteo as they returned to their homeland yesterday. Instead just a couple of television cameras and a handful of autograph hunters welcomed the two gentlemen to Verona as they flew in for Chelsea's European Cup-Winners' Cup, semi-final, first leg with Vicenza tonight.

Maybe that was just as well as Vialli's stylish image might not have survived the damage caused by his jarring juxtaposition of *de rigueur* sunglasses and baseball cap with a naff nylon Autoglass puffa jacket. Nor would some of the *Serie A* movers and shakers have welcomed his opinion of them.

The men who ran Italian football, ventured Vialli, made a manager's life impossible. "In Italy they don't give you any time," he said. "If a manager

loses the first three matches of the season he is sacked. The chairman put a fortune into football and expect to see results straight away. They do not have any patience and a manager is always under pressure."

Vialli cited the example of Arrigo Sacchi, who survived a bad start to make Milan the best club in Europe, to show the value of patience but he could have equally mentioned his opponent tonight. After seven jobs in seven years Francesco Guidolin is set to complete four seasons with Vicenza, a rare achievement. In that time he has taken Vicenza from a mid-ranking *Serie B* team to a *Serie A* club which even had the temerity to lead the table two seasons ago for the first time in their 96-year history.

Guidolin, who cycles thousands of kilometres a season to relax and ponder his management decisions, is now expected to get on his bike by choice at the end of the season, possibly

to Udinese. This, however, is unlikely to weaken the resolve of a team described by Di Matteo as "the Italian Wimbledon".

"I have played against them and their manager's teams," Vialli said. "They do not have any superstars but they work very hard and are very organised. It is going to be very hard, very tight. I know Italian football. They are the best in the world for organisation and preparation. They are still the best in Europe and if we can beat an Italian team it shows we are ready to do something in Europe."

The third member of the Italian *Azzurri*, Gianfranco Zola, was not with the party having flown to Bologna for treatment on a groin injury earlier in the week. Vialli said he was fit and he trained with the team last night but doubts still remain.

Graeme Le Saux is fit after recovering from Sunday's Coca-Cola Cup final win over Middlesbrough. It was his first game

back after an ankle injury and he said: "It has taken me two days to recover, the longest it's ever taken me to do so. After not playing for four weeks, to then play 120 minutes in a cup final was draining, emotionally as much as physically."

"You do recover quicker when you win and while we didn't have a chance to really celebrate - there was no champagne before or after the game - we did go back to club and had a meal with our families."

As against Real Betis in the last round Chelsea will be looking for a change of emphasis, said Graham Rix, the coach. "Nil-nil is no good. You have to keep it tight but you need an away goal as a lot of British teams have found out. You might think your own place is a fortress but how are you going to approach the second game after a nil-nil? If you go out willy-nilly and leave it open at the back you

might concede one. Then you're chasing the game which is the last thing you want."

Tore Andre Flo is more likely to play than Mark Hughes but Vialli's main decision, if Zola is fit, is whether to play himself. Vicenza, whose controversial weekend defeat, to Internazionale (won with a 95th-minute Ronaldo penalty) left them four points above the relegation zone, are at full strength.

The club has three Uruguayans but no famous names. The main danger, Pasquale Luisio, who scored against previous opponents Legia Warsaw, Shaktar Donetsk and Roda JC, is a shadow of his noted Vicenza predecessors, Paolo Rossi and Roberto Baggio.

The 34-year-old playmaker Domenico Di Carlo, like Fabio Viviani a veteran of Vicenza's *Serie C* days, will need to be nullified but Chelsea have the quality to return with a result.

Chelsea (possible): De Gea; Strick; Durrant; Libonati; La Saux; Pires; Wain; Di Matteo; Newton; Vialli/Zola/Flo. Vicenza (possible): Brivio; Mendez; Baggio; De Luca; Cocco; Schenard; Di Carlo; Viviani; Antonowicz; Luisio; Di Napoli. FA Cup countdown, page 30

england expects...

vicenza vs chelsea from 7:30pm tonight on

5

